



# GOLDEN FURROWS

An Historical Chronicle of Swift Current

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# GOLDEN FURROWS

The world of promise, and hope, and gain,  
The world of gold, and the world of grain,  
And the world of the willing hand-

—E. Pauline Johnson.



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## IN RETROSPECT

By Margaret Baldwin

Standing upon the everlasting hills,

I see the city nestled in the lovely hollow;

Red roofs, blue and green—

A tall spire in supplication to the sky!

Schools, where children play,

And learn, with other things,

Their country's ancient lore.

Or, if the day be gone, and night

Has spread her dewy coverlet,

Myriads of twinkling coloured lights

With gay life hurrying beneath.

Again, in retrospect I stand,

A mighty Indian chieftain by my side,

Unmindful of my presence.

[This land is his, not mine!]

His sombre brooding eyes take in the valley

Where straggling huts portend what is to be.

He scans those ageless hills

Where white men's heads roam far and wide.

Wistfully his mind reviews the story of his race

Gleaned from the mists of memory.

He sees tomorrow's change

And knows, unwillingly, that this must be.

For progress moves by law inassailable!

Today is linked with yesterday,

To form tomorrow's pattern.

The guiding star points ever upward,

Onward, to eternity.





### EDITORS' - PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In compiling an historical chronicle such as this, it is reasonable to believe that slight errors will creep in, despite all efforts to double-check dates and facts. We therefore ask your forbearance if your memory differs with those who were our sources of information.

There may also be some criticism that certain organizations have not been featured. In these cases the fault lies with the organizations, and not with the publisher, since their officers or historians have not provided the editors with the necessary material.



Swift Current  
Turns the Clock  
Back to Its

# PIONEER DAYS

In Commemoration of Saskatchewan's Golden  
Jubilee and as a Mark of Respect to Its Pioneers



Streams flowing down from the eastern end of the Cypress Hills form Swift Current Creek, which winds across the prairies for a hundred miles—first north-easterly and then, turning sharply, toward the northwest—before emptying into the South Saskatchewan River. Only one city is located on this Creek—Swift Current.

Through the centuries, bands of Indians—Crees, Assiniboinés, Salteaux, Chippewyans, Blackfoot and Sioux—camped beside the Swift Current Creek. A favorite winter camp-site was the valley of the tributary stream, Pelletier Creek, where, beside the lake of the same name, the Indians found wood and water, fish under the ice, and good grass for their horses.



There is no record of the first white man who saw Swift Current Creek, but he must have been an explorer, a hunter, a trader, a prospector or, possibly, a missionary. By the 1860's a number of white men and others with some white blood added to their Indian heritage, were regularly crossing the High Plains, and the smoke of their

camp-fires hung above the valley of the Swift Current Creek.

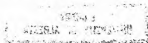
The creaking carts of these overland voyageurs were piled high with goods for trading with the Indians: flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, salt, knives, needles, copper kettles, and cotton prints, for their journey to the foothills. On the way back to Red River, the carts carried furs, pemmican and buffalo hides. As these traders "bought low and sold high", their trade was a profitable one.

## Rivière au Courant

They found it confusing that the Creek bore the same name as the River. The Indian word for "Swift Flowing" was Saskatchewan; so they re-named the smaller stream Rivière au Courant, which their English successors turned into Swift Current.

The evening of August 24, 1874, was moonlit, and the rising moon saw a new sight along the Swift Current Creek as the North West Mounted Police approached, on their famous march from the Red River to the Rockies.

The banks were too steep to take their cannon, so everyone went to work to make a grade down to the water. All safely crossed, they made camp. Colonel Macleod had gone south to pick up supplies by Frenchman's Creek, where they had been left by the Boundary Survey Party earlier in the summer. To await his return, the main body of the Force made only short daily



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marches and the men did some leisurely hunting.

They shot buffalo, antelope, deer, ducks, and geese, while their horses enjoyed the good pasturage and fresh water. On their stay in the district they computed the distance they had come as 580 miles, and one day took a latitude reading showing 50—8, variations 2—30, by the Pole Star.

In 1876, some of these men were back in the area, to found Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills. This installation on Battle Creek was large for the time, and soon a village sprang up outside the walls of the Fort. Some 600 people lived there and kept constant touch with Fort Garry, so a well worn trail connected the two Forts, a trail that crossed Swift Current Creek.



*Hauling Homestead Supplies in 1910*

### **Railroad Bridges Creek**

By this trail, after 1880, came rumors of the building of a railway, and in the fall of 1882, the C.P.R. bridged Swift Current Creek. Construction went a few miles west that year, but because of a good quantity of water available, officials decided to place their depot by the Creek and ultimately found a town.

Two gentlemen had arrived ahead of the railway and took up land that they offered the railway as a townsite. But their price was too high so another location was chosen on the west side of the Creek. A Mr. Fraser Timms put up a small store, east on what is now Railway Street, the first business building in the settlement.

Construction had to be halted when winter came, and Mr. Timms left a brother, the C.P.R., a caretaker—and everyone else went off East. These two lonely men were the sole white residents of Swift Current during the winter of 1882-83.

As soon as spring called across the prairies, things livened up. Three hundred workmen arrived and began building a depot, freight shed, water-tank, dam, roundhouse, and the indispensable dining-hall. Two more small stores were erected—one by a Mr. Curry and another by McDonald and Gregory.

### **Hudson's Bay Didn't Settle**

While this was formerly Hudson's Bay Territory, that venerable Company never entered the business life of Swift Current. However, there was a slight tie, for Mr. Gregory married the daughter of a Hudson's Bay factor.

With all the activity around the Creek, bands of Indians arrived and camped nearby. There were buffalo still in this area, and the Indians would bring in fresh meat for sale, a welcome addition to a diet of canned goods.

They were also into everything, and one evening when inspecting the nine-foot-deep



*Indian Squaws at Early Summer Fair*



trench from the dam to the water-tower, one of the squaws fell in. Her children claimed a couple of white men had pushed her. The situation was pregnant with possibilities, so the two men fled. One hid under his bunk, the other made for the railway kitchen, donned the chef's cap and apron, and began cooking. The children secured help; mother was hoisted out and a search begun for the "culprits". The one man under the bunk was hauled out and fined \$2.00—\$1.00 for himself and one for his absent friend, who was still busy baking—and shaking, in the railway kitchen!

Chief Red Pheasant arrived from Battleford to see for himself what all the fuss was about. He was entranced with the railway and given a short ride, which entranced him still more. On his return North, he regaled his tribal brothers with the wonders of civilization as exemplified at Swift Current.

#### Wood, a Precious Commodity

Fuel was scarce and expensive and wood was delivered in poles that had to be sawn and split, so wood-piles were precious possessions. An Indian, Long Jim, had the habit of waiting until his neighbors were in bed, then visited their wood-piles on night forays about the embryo town.

There had been settlements along the North Saskatchewan for a long time. These were supplied from Winnipeg by cart or boat. A brisk fur trade plied up and

down the waterway until the railway reached Edmonton.

The Battleford Herald for January 20th, 1883, published this statement: "The present freight terminus is Swift Current." So on March third, a man named Goodwin Marchand was dispatched to plot a path for freighting overland. Like the Dominion Land Surveyors who followed him, he found he couldn't improve on the old trail beaten out by moccasined feet through the centuries, as Indians plodded from the Missouri to the North Saskatchewan river.

#### First Sask. Landing Ferry

One hazard of the Old Battleford Trail was the crossing of the South Saskatchewan, so when Marchand was loaded up and ready to go back North, he lashed onto his load an 18 by 9-foot scow, the first of several ferries to serve at Saskatchewan Landing.

Marchand was the first of many freighters to load at Swift Current. Some used horses, as he did; others had ox-teams. Hundreds of Red River carts creaked up "The Trail", and four million pounds were so transported in the year 1886. Supplies for the Police posts along the North Saskatchewan were delivered in this manner.

Once, when a police party was in Swift Current, nine of their horses were driven off by Montana thieves and not recovered for some time. Another outfit was just ready to leave when a train came roaring



Swift Current in 1905, looking north on Central Avenue.



**Early Means of Transportation, Typical of the Young West**

in; the animals bolted and supplies were scattered all over the townsite.

It was a common thing to see a long train of teams coming over the North Hill, oxen lowing, dust rising, men shouting, dogs barking.

In the spring of 1885, there was an Indian and Metis uprising in Saskatchewan. Swift Current residents were relieved when the Indians in town took themselves a few miles further north. Some of the men came back one day and staged a few war dances and worked themselves into quite a frenzy. Given gifts of food and tobacco, they departed peaceably, though somewhat reluctantly.

#### **Murder Plot Nipped in Bud**

That same night they plotted to murder all but one of the district residents, the favored exception being Hill Gregory, local storekeeper. They were Cree and Chipewyan Indians, and their chiefs fell into an argument over some of the details of the massacre, so the danger was averted.

But they did intercept a courier on his way from Battleford to the telegraph line at Swift Current. His dispatches were in his shoes and not found. During the arguing the messenger escaped and reached Swift Current, which now was alerted to a possible Indian attack.

Fortunately, some troops arrived—en-route to the troubled area near Fish Creek and Batoche—on the South Saskatchewan, some miles east of The Landing.

The soldiers rounded up the Crees and Chipewyans and escorted them to a Reserve at Fort Qu'Appelle, so they were no longer a menace.

Military tents were pitched south of the railway track as the soldiers awaited their comrades. They had with them something that was new on the prairies—a Gatling gun; so one evening they put on a demonstration near a slough west of town. The horses stampeded when the gun exploded, and repairs had to be rushed from Winnipeg.

Finally Colonel Otter, with 500 troops, a police party, 200 wagons and many horses, set off for the river. It was in flood and they had to wait two days for the steamer Northcote to arrive from Medicine Hat to ferry them across on their march to relieve The Battlefords.

The uprising quelled, prisoners were brought to the railway here, where they were heavily shackled and guarded. When offered food, they refused to sit at a table, and squatted on the floor. Their followers agreed to treaty terms, and peace once more reigned over the high plains.



# Homestead Days in the District



In Western Canada, the years between the formation of the Provinces in 1905, and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, belonged to the Homesteader. Some of these people came from the United States, travelling the old, old Indian trails. Others came from Eastern Canada, and some even from Europe.

Peak of the surge was about 1912, and older residents of Swift Current recall long lines in front of the Land Office, settlers' effects piled on the prairie, and a constant stream of teams heavily loaded with lumber and supplies going up the North Hill.

In town, there was added activity too, to supply the needs of the new settlers. A livery stable rented rigs to land locators, lumber yards hummed, new stores opened. But bread was baked at home, and one lady who had a large family remembers that her weekly output averaged 100 loaves. To keep the bread-dough warm at night was often a problem, as the houses had heaters rather than furnaces. Often the bread-pan would be surrounded with hot irons, or covered with a fur coat or buffalo robe.

## The Awakening of Progress

Wet weather brought mud, and there were only narrow planks over the puddles until a young mother suggested spacing these to allow passage of baby buggies. So some sidewalks were built in town—high wooden affairs, flanked by hitching rails in some cases.

A small private telephone service was inaugurated by the late John Fetter and his wife, who later sold out to the Government. There was no transit system. A horse

and buggy might be hired, or when the ladies wished to attend a tea or an evening gathering, they arranged to have a carriage call for them. This was a brougham brought from Montreal by William Brunyee.

Some low-grade coal was found locally, but most fuel was imported and, in stormy weather, was rationed out in 500-pound lots. Water was a problem too, the rural people using sough-water for washing and hauled drinking water from any well within stone-boat distance of the farms. Supplies included flour, sugar, salt, tea, coffee, dried fruits, ham, bacon, yeast cakes and matches. Candles and coal-oil lamps provided illumination. Gradually horses replaced oxen.



In the early Homestead Days, this district was dotted with Sod Houses. This one above is typical, built in 1910.



Here are scenes reminiscent of the days when horse and man power were needed in large quantities. Top photo shows an early threshing scene on a district farm, and lower photo shows an eight-horse outfit working the virgin prairie. Farming has come a long way since then. Today, this work is handled easily by one or two men using modern farm equipment.



# Era of the

Cattle Barons and Famous

# '76

As a reward for building a railway across Canada, the C.P.R. was given large land grants. To encourage settlement in Western Canada, some of this land was offered at one dollar an acre and a Company formed in Britain in 1888, purchased 120,000 acres. This was the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company and the twelve properties of 10,000 acres each that they acquired were located in Southeastern Alberta and Southwestern Saskatchewan.

Contracts were let for building identical houses on the twelve ranches and most of the material, including square-cut nails was shipped from the Old Country, as were the machines, the plows and other farm tools. The original plan was to stock each ranch with 500 cattle, 2,000 sheep, 50 mares, and some hogs, but a variation was found both in weather and grass, and it was decided that the sheep did better when on the Swift Current Ranch.

## Some Came to Stay

This was south of the railway, with the ranch buildings north and east of where Oman school is today. Scottish shepherds and good Scottish sheep dogs came to care for the 35,000 sheep usually run in bands of 2,000. William Alexander looked after the ranch, his helpers being young men from the Old Country who had come with the Hon. H. P. Clinton, a shareholder, and the late James Smart.

The sheep ranged south to the South Fork of the Creek, which is where they met

the range of the Cypress Hills' ranchers. Camps were established along the stream. The bands wintered at Lac Pelletier, where in summer, irrigation encouraged a vegetable garden. The sheep had been purchased in Idaho, Washington and Montana and did well on the nutritious native grasses that grew profusely on the plains.

## Birth of a Great Brand

As some of the cattle for the Company's ranches had borne the "76" brand when purchased in the United States, this brand was retained, and before long, the Company's name was shortened to "The 76". Bad luck dogged its progress. In 1898, it was re-organized and did better for a few years. Sir Lister-Kaye had been the first President, lived in Western Canada for a time, but never understood local conditions.

When their contracts were up, a number of the young men from the Old Country who had come out to work for "The 76", took up land and established ranches for themselves along the Creek or beside the South Saskatchewan River. Swift Current was their shipping point and also served as a trading-post for the ranches scattered over an even wider area.

At this time not more than 10 women lived in Swift Current, where, besides "The 76" ranch house and the C.P.R. buildings, there were a few stores and eight houses. The men were either in business or worked for the railway. The stores carried work clothes, trappers' and prospec-



tors' supplies, lariats, ropes, etc., besides housekeeping staples

The last buffalo in this area were killed in 1887 and 1888, and their meat was replaced by beef and lamb. Dried fruit, flour, sugar, tea, coffee, jam were other menu-makers, while bachelors flipped flapjacks and trimmed their tea with syrup.

There were few wells, as the creek could not be depended upon for, in spring, it flooded, and during hot weather dried up so completely that hay was cut from its flats. Some winters were mild, others severe. One year, the snow was so deep that railroad children rode their sleds over the top of box cars on the railroad siding.

#### Costly Epidemic

In 1901, 20,000 sheep were sheared at Swift Current, and a large shipment of wool went East, as did fat lambs and prize-winning show sheep. Usually, shearers came down from Medicine Hat, but in 1902 a couple arrived who had been working in South America and Mexico. Soon after their arrival some sheep fell ill, and before long an epidemic was raging.

This was finally recognized as anthrax—scourge of the sheep industry—and was supposed to have come on the clothing or the shears of the foreign shearers. The loss

in sheep was heavy—in fact, the Company never recovered from the blow. In 1903, only 6,000 sheep were shipped from Swift Current. In 1904, the bands were further reduced. By 1905, only a caretaker remained at "The 76" ranch-house. The next year, the buildings were rented and, gradually, the land was sold off in small farms. Today, all that remains of the "Old 76" are memorials.

In 1903, the Swift Current Land Company was organized and did a brisk business. A buyer in those days was able to homestead on the adjoining quarter for an extra payment of ten dollars, and the end of the open range was fast approaching. Ranchers suffered another set-back in May of that year, when a sudden snowstorm blew up and took heavy toll of both livestock and wild animals. Swift Current Creek flooded and hundreds of head of stock were drowned.

In 1903, the Imperial Hotel, was built and The Swift Current Sun began its long and successful career.

1904 saw a plague of mange on the plains and dipping-vats were built all over the countryside, the one at Swift Current being 150 feet long. The winter was mild and, while livestock prices were low, so was the cost of production. The ranchers' prosperity was reflected in their commercial centre and there was a small building boom in Swift Current.

#### Saskatchewan Was Born

The year 1905 saw the formation of the Province of Saskatchewan, heralding other changes. A number of large grazing leases were not renewed, instead, land was thrown open for homestead settlement. Homesteaders wished to replace the oxen, with which they came into the country, with horses, as there was a good horse market. Many of the animals were imported from Ontario and the United States, and sold at a good profit here.

June 1906, saw another flood on Swift Current Creek, higher even than that usually experienced in a normal spring run-off. The wet spring was followed by a dry fall,



Go to "Pans" 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

and conditions looked good for the winter until November 18, when a six-day blizzard swept over the prairies. This was but the first of what is still called "The Bad Winter." Storm followed storm. Men who had down tools in November didn't see them again until May.

Early in February, there was a short Chanoak that melted surface snow. The wa-

ter then froze, forming a crust through which the stock were unable to reach the native hay beneath. Antelope and deer perished, ruffed grouse found no shelter, dead cattle and horses lay all about. Indians huddled in their camps or demanded food from the Agencies. When spring finally broke the spell, the ranchers counted their losses at from 50% to 70%, and many of them left the country.



Fenton's Grove, local picnic spot, inundated by water in 1913 when City Dam was constructed.

## Climate and Field-Crop Statistics

Swift Current Creek flows through rolling prairie land on its way to join the South Saskatchewan river. Along most of its course it has quite a deep and wide valley, but fewer trees than many other prairie streams. The area it traverses is one of low precipitation and high evaporation. Average precipitation has been measured at 15.24 inches, while the evaporation rate is 29.70.

Field crops of wheat, rye, oats, barley and other grains are successfully grown in the district by dry land farming methods. There is, as yet, comparatively little irrigation. A 30-year average for No. 1 Hard Spring wheat is 50,000,000 bushels. In the years 1922, '23, '24, the average yield was 20 bushels to the acre. The worst year was 1937, when only 8.26 inches of moisture

were received and the crop was practically nil.

In the fall of 1904, wheat sold at 52c per bushel, while in 1912, the price had risen to 80c. Highest price received was \$2.86 in 1917, during the First Great War.

The native grasses are nutritious, and cattle, horses and sheep ranches are found about the country-side. But it takes a lot of pasture to feed one animal, the estimate being 10 acres for one cow.

The climate is dry and invigorating at the 2670 altitude. In winter, the snowfall averages 46 inches and, as Swift Current is on the eastern fringe of the Chanoak belt, there is some benefit from this warm wind. Weather is variable when the thermometer can stand at the century mark in July, yet plunge to 40 below in January.

# There Has to be a First Time for Everything

These are the "First" to Happen Here

For a few Swift Current "firsts", the first wedding performed was in 1886, that of Mr and Mrs William Sanders, the first white child born was Walter Knight, the first white woman settler was Mrs. Margaret Plaxton, the first doctor was Dr W

the homesteaders. But in 1912, two, and even three-storied houses were favoured, built of lumber, stone and brick. This was the day of plentiful and cheap domestic help. Today most of the "mansions" have been re-converted into compact duplexes



Steam Power was New in 1911. This "Case" is Ploughing Eight Furrows

H Field, who also operated a drug store in the building now occupied by Bradbrooke's Drug Store.

First residents along the Creek lived in teepees made of buffalo hide. Later some of the Indians built and used sod shacks, one of the last of these being the site of the United Church. In 1912 Swift Current experienced its first big building boom. The first whites had erected hasty one-storey frame buildings, a style favored, too, by

or apartments, with oil-burning furnaces, and electricity in the kitchen. Propane gas is becoming popular in the rural areas.

It might be noted that the first California bungalow was built in 1912, and regarded as a great curiosity. Today, the ranch style bungalow seems the most popular choice of any single house design.

The first homesteader in the Swift Current district was W. G. Knight, who, on August 4, 1885, filed on SE 24-15-14-W3.



Swift Current looked like this in 1901. Impervious Hotel under scaffold at left. Town pump, right foreground



# Social Life *of the* Homestead Era



Some of the parties of the homestead period were real social events, with flowers brought in from Medicine Hat and candle-lit tea tables. The hostess and her helpers were usually attired in fashionably-long frocks, long white gloves, and hats with sweeping plumes.

No ladies' dress shop had been opened in Swift Current, but Madame Desjardines came regularly from Winnipeg and displayed her latest modas at the Hotel, while other women enjoyed the services of a clever dressmaker, who had her headquarters in Medicine Hat.

In December 1912, the Officers of the 27th Light Horse were hosts at a military ball in the Empress Hotel. Scarlet mess jackets mingled with the resplendent gowns of the lady guests, while civilian males looked more sombre in their evening dress.

## Road Shows Popular

The Princess Royal and Lyric Theatres were built about this time and attracted travelling theatrical companies and outstanding road-show entertainers. A few boxes were installed, and these were occasionally occupied by local celebrities in evening dress, giving Swift Current quite a metropolitan air. But with the outbreak of World War I, the ladies organized into work groups and since that time entertaining has been on a much more casual level.

How about the Homesteader's wife? Her life was not so gay; in fact, often lonely, but newcomers were welcomed to the community and given a helping hand until they became adjusted to the new life. Many life-long friendships were formed among the pioneer families. Houses were never locked, particularly in the country area, for

a traveler might need shelter in a blizzard. At the ranches, wayfarers stabled their horses or teams, had a meal and bed for as long as they wished.

## Danced 'Til Midnight

Happy house-parties were held, when the guests arrived with food, and ate and danced until daylight. In the summer, picnics were arranged, one group of Norwegians playing host to their neighbors on May 7, the Norwegian National Holiday.

The story is told of a homesteader who had to go to town for supplies and, because of a blizzard, was unable to return home for three days. His wife couldn't reach the fuel pile, so burned the house partitions and part of the furniture to keep the children warm.

In town, the teen-agers of this period spent evenings in each other's homes, popping corn and pulling taffy. In winter, they skated on the old C.P.R. Dam, and in summer toasted marshmallows beside a bonfire under the few poplars beside the dam and swam in the Creek. Boys perched on the corral fence on the site of the Healy Hotel and watched cowboys breaking broncs. When motor cars came on the scene, there were picnics at The Landing, with adolescent voices lifted in song 'neath the prairie sky. All in all, it was a good life and a rich one, spiritually.

**PERSONAL.** — Mrs. S. A. Hutchinson will receive Wednesday Jan. 25, and afterwards on the 4th Wednesday in each month.

**PERSONAL.** — Mrs. Edward McKenna will kindly give a tea at her residence in the 12th ave. on Thursday the 31st inst. in aid of the St. Stephen's Ladies Guild, from 3 o'clock till 5 p.m. when a silver collection will be taken. — (Items in The Star 1911.)



\* Sleigh riding parties were popular here in the era around 1910. Top photo shows a group all set for a spin.

\* Those duds, right, may look funny now, but they were right in style when picture was taken on Landing ferry around 1915.

\* Bottom, local tennisorio parlor in days when hair cuts were two-bits and, if you knew the barber, necks were thrown in free.





*Scenes Like This Were Commonplace During Homestead Days*

## Dedication

To you, who, since Swift Current's infancy  
Have given her your love and loyalty,  
Who planted in her young heart the first seed  
Of tender thought for those in grief or need,  
Who taught her well the art of friendliness,  
Quick to dispel a stranger's loneliness,  
Who gave her food "Buck Harvest" never yields —  
The nourishment of soul which comes from fields  
Of golden grain produced by fertile soil,  
God's sun and rain and man's creative toil,  
Who made her conscious of the gift of laughter  
To overcome self-pity or disaster,  
Who kept her courage high through all the years  
Of hardship and privation — Pioneers!

TO YOU THIS BOOK

*By Clara Armstrong*





## From the Pens of the Pioneers

Selection of Stories Typical of  
the Days of the Virgin Sod.

### 30 Miles Per Week Was Speed of "Ox Express"

By Miss Violet King

No doubt the ranchers were the real pioneers of our district as they came in here shortly after the railway was built into Swift Current. E. Hogg, who is still here, along with the late Ed. Tulley, G. G. Smith, W. W. Knight, and McNee Bros., were the ranchers in our immediate district when we came.

In the fall of 1905, and springs of 1906-07, settlers or farmers, began to come in to break the prairie and start to farm the land. Among these were the Stewarts, W. Scott, J. Rouse, A. Mooto, C. King, H. Caffyn, R. Rogers, A. O. Nicodemus, D. Kreider, and others whose names I cannot remember.

J. Rouse, who farmed with oxen and drove 22 head, strung out 2 and 2, hauled grain to Swift Current, a distance of 30 miles, returning with loads of fence posts for the Matador ranch. (He drove oxen without lines, just a whip). It would take him about a week to make the trip, as he fed the oxen on grass only, five hours travel and five hours resting and grazing. Many other farmers had oxen in those days, some three, some 4, to do their work and hauling from Swift Current. When farmers began to make a little money they sold their oxen and bought horses, paying as high as \$650 per team.

A number of the settlers brought their horses and effects with them, and came by train from the States, Ontario and other parts of Eastern Canada. When the late

L. R. Knapp came here with his family from Big Timber, Mont., they drove their stock and effects across country in covered wagons, the men riding horseback, driving the stock and letting them graze as they came.

During the first few years, water had to be hauled for miles from springs in coulees. Many gathered dry wood, too, from these coulees, or buffalo chips from the prairie were brought home to burn, as the fuel otherwise had to be hauled from Swift Current.

#### First Mail-Route Set Up

The first regular mail route was established in the fall of 1908, from Swift Current to Saskatchewan Landing, then here, which was then given the name of Stewart Valley, the distributing point being in the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Stewart, he being the first official postmaster. A few years later, the route was changed from Swift Current to Stewart Valley, then Saskatchewan Landing, and driven by team.

For a number of years there were no telephones, only a system invented and run on the barb wire fences (a few of these still exist.) The first government telephone line came from Swift Current, later another from Success.

Trips to Swift Current were truly ones of hardships—hauling lumber out to build homes — then later, hauling grain to be marketed. The men started before daylight for Swift Current, stopping at the McTaggart Springs to rest the horses and feed them and eat a cold lunch themselves. They remained in Swift Current overnight.

This went on until 1912, when the Empress line was built and men began hauling to Success. There were fewer hills and most of them made the trip in one day.

Since 1907, there have been church services. In the early days young student ministers were sent out in the summer and would ride horseback or drive with horse and buggy to reach the people. Since 1908, A. M. Thistlewaite has conducted Sunday school and is still carrying on after 45 years.

### Winter Was Social Time

In the winter, neighbors would meet for a social card game, or a friendly dance, Walter Stewart was usually the violinist. They would load up, perhaps 16 to 20 in a sleigh, with heated rocks to keep their feet warm.

As more settlers came, a school was built in 1911.

Then, in the fall of 1923, the railroad came to Stewart Valley. People from miles about saw the "Driving of the Last Spike". The late G. G. Smith held the last spike while the late R. B. Stewart drove it. Four elevators were built soon after, and the first store was built by a partnership of the late J. E. Briggs of Swift Current, and Jacob Bay, then of Beaver Flat. Mr. Bay still operates the store.



## Every Homesteader Had to be a "Sod-buster"

By J. J. Paul

I came to Swift Current in 1907, hunting for a homestead. With others we hired a livery team from the Brunyee livery barn, which was then just north of where the Healy Hotel now stands. I took up land one mile west of Pelletier Lake in 1910 and farmed there until 1948, when I moved to Swift Current and bought the old '76 ranch house.

I built a sod house, with a sod barn nearby, in the Vesper district. My neighbor bachelors in their frame shacks found my structure a most welcome spot during

the 40 below zero weather we experienced week after week that winter, and the abundance of fish obtainable from the lake nearby, was also a drawing attraction.

### Slabs From Sloughs

To build a sod house, one must secure and cut the slabs for it from the sloughs where an abundance of grass is mixed with the earth, then carefully put together as a bricklayer lays his bricks, no cracks between, one slab overlapping the next. After all are placed and dry, the inside surface is smoothed and plastered with mud to make it chunk proof and air proof.

I had one memorable experience while living in it; awakening one cold winter night, I discovered that my shack roof was burning in places. The first article to be moved immediately to safety was my buffalo coat, serving as a wrapping to keep rising bread warm. I aroused the friend spending the night with me and we hurriedly dressed and commenced to extinguish the blaze by shovelling snow on it. This took some time as occasionally a fresh spot needed attention. He worked while I slept, but after two days' intermittent burning, we had it under control.



## Hauled Water 2½ Miles to Start 2,000 Trees

Arthur Ward

From his boyhood home 12 miles north of Sheffield, Yorkshire, England, one of our prairie settlers, Arthur Ward, arrived in Canada in the spring of 1908. In May 1905, after working in Manitoba, he moved westward, his claim for a homestead east of Swift Current being filed in the Dominion Land Sub-office here.

In 1918, Mr. Ward planted 2,000 trees and shrubs around his home, for which he

hauled water two and a half miles. These attracted many species of birds and made the Ward homestead a beautiful and attractive spot, with the prairie landscape surrounding

In the streets of Swift Current in the spring of 1905, there were to be seen grass snakes, many of them lying crushed by wagon wheels. These were thought to have been enticed from around the sloughs by the heavy rains that year

Rural Mail delivery was commenced to Cut Bank during 1909, at the home of the postmaster T. K. Linklater. Wm Smith, postmaster for the Bigford office, which was installed the year of 1908, had the contract to haul the mail from Waldeck to both these points. The district, known to the ranchers as Cut Bank, seemed to fit in with the steep banks along the creek, and was often used as a resting place for the cattle to be shipped from Waldeck by the Turkey Track, Dave Ellens and McLaughlin ranches.



**"Burnham" Forced on Cut Bank**

It was the installation of the post office that caused the name Cut Bank to be changed to Burnham. The postal authorities said that the name conflicted with another name and, without any consultation, foisted the name of Burnham upon the district. Later, looking up the maps, the only name in Saskatchewan coming any way near to it was Cut Knife.

Mr. Ward had difficulty getting water hauled for his stock for seven years. He had tried sinking 11 wells varying from 10 to 20 feet, without success. However, water was finally obtained at 103 feet, and plenty of it.

About this time, the "girl he had left behind" decided to come out from England, and theirs was the first wedding in the

new Methodist church in Swift Current, taking place on March 13, 1913. Rev. C. S. Ealey, the Baptist minister here, conducted the wedding ceremony

### **Struck Coal on Homestead**

During the fall of 1907, a Will Dunn and Mr. Ward obtained a license to mine some of the coal (which was visible in seams on the sides of the coulees) near his homestead. With a team of horses and scraper, they uncovered one seam five feet thick and drove 17 yards into the seam which was of the lignite variety, but at that stage they abandoned it. Sometimes they would strike a vein of bituminous coal in places about two inches thick, but it would soon peter out. They wheeled the coal out in a barrow and some of the curious homesteaders paid them 10 cents a load.

Over the years Mr. Ward continued his interest in bird life and in 1938, was granted a permit to band migratory birds on his farm at Burnham. Over 3,000 birds have been trapped, consisting of 81 species.



### **1906 Spud Crop Grown in Holes in Ground**

Michael MacLachlan, with his wife and three children, filed on land in 1906. The Mennonite tract of land adjoined and their colony had been established since 1904. They were good neighbors to the newcomers. The district at that time was called Longford.

Having no ground plowed, just holes were made in the ground and potatoes were planted and a surprisingly good crop was grown. Having sold his two oxen which he had brought west with him, he bought two horses. A barn then had to be built to shelter them. With five stout poles and wheat straw off 100 acres, a barn was hastily constructed. The house, which was also hastily built, was not weatherproof and during an illness of his wife, an umbrella had to be held over the patient and Dr. Field.

Starting farming in earnest, a heifer was bought for \$40. Sandwiched between the horses for warmth, the heifer sank down, but it was extricated and to save it, it had to be taken in the house until milder weather prevailed. By that time the family had to move over to a neighbor's while the house was reconditioned.



Mrs. MacLachlan, the daughter of a Lancashire editor, was often called on in sickness or maternity cases, to assist Dr. Field and the late Dr. H. C. Burroughs. She quietly and efficiently nursed in the district, braved storms, and had many narrow escapes from freezing.

Mr. MacLachlan tells of finding a horse dead in an empty shack where it had tried to find shelter in a blizzard, but a cat was sitting on the horse, very much alive.

#### Four-Horse Man a "Toff"

Plowing was generally done by trading something for breaking 10 or more acres, by someone who was fortunate enough to have an outfit able to pull a plow. Oxen were mostly used, as they were easy keepers and fed themselves by grazing. A four-horse owner was considered wealthy.

Some Negro families had also settled in the district. Not being used to the rigors of the cold Canadian climate, the 1918 'flu epidemic took the lives of several.

The name "Longford" was given to the school district of this community by Bert Long, a rancher in that locality, and Mr. MacLachlan added the "ford".



## Land Office a Popular Place in Those Days

By Mrs. J. E. Moen

Between 1910 and 1912, the Dominion Lands Office in Swift Current was located in the upstairs of Argus and Cooper store, E. B. R. Pragnell, a brother-in-law of Mrs. Roy Graham, was chief, with a staff of three stenographers and half a dozen or so clerks. The late J. T. Dodds and the late Wm. Milburn were the homestead inspectors, Mr. Milburn for the north country and Mr. Dodds for the south.

The office opened at nine in the morning and it was not uncommon to find a line of men on the stairs eagerly waiting for it to open. As it was quite possible for a man to be pushed out of his position in the rush, tickets were handed out just before the door was opened. There was always the possibility that two men were after the same land, so the No. 1 ticket was the coveted one and this, of course, was given to the first in line. However, the lineup often reached the street, and men camped there for days, using blankets and tarps to keep them warm. Much good-natured banter went on between these campers and the passers-by. Hopes were high and hardships were overlooked.



It was a common sight to see homesteaders driving through town, their wagons piled high with lumber, farm implements, household goods, etc., with perhaps a cow tied to the back of the wagon, starting on the long trek to their homesteads.

The one picnic ground in those early

days was the Fenton Grove, inundated when the city dam was built in 1913

Two or three places on Railway Street the homes of railway workers, I believe, boasted the only trees in the town.



## Lady Teacher Got Rough Introduction to West

By Mrs. F G Smith

Neidpath district was named by its first postmaster, Mr Mitchell, after a castle in Scotland in the vicinity of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell's home, before coming to Saskatchewan in the year 1908.

A pioneer resident in the district since 1908, is F. G. Smith, who homesteaded at Swift Current in the days when the Indian cowboys from the south used to ride their horses 'pell-mell' in the hotel and entertain the citizens right royally. The Anglican minister at the time was Rev Stillwell who assisted Mr Smith in locating his land near the airport east of town. The late D J. Sykes was a neighbor in the same district and many interesting times they had working together, breaking bronchos, and experimenting in cooking, making biscuits, and what have you

An amusing incident to all concerned, happened when the first lady teacher arrived at Herbert, Sask., from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, to teach in the Fernbank district. This was in 1912. The secretary-treasurer at the time, the late F R. Bolin, left word with the agent in Herbert, to the effect when the teacher arrived to have her get the 'livery man' to drive her to her destination. However, Mr. Mitchell, the postmaster, happened to be in town that day and offered the teacher a ride out with him. He had a load of coal and groceries, so it was a trip over rough roads, a distance of 20 miles or so. Such was life in the early days when people were willing to extend hospitality regardless of their means.

## Pioneer Grandmother Alone With Memories

By Mrs. R. A Schofield

My husband and I came to Canada from Nebraska in March 1909, but it was not until the following spring that he located land nine miles northwest of Webb, and we settled there with our two boys, one not quite two years and the other only seven weeks old

One morning during the next spring, my husband asked me to drive over to a neighbor's to get something he needed. With my eldest boy, then almost three, I started off. All went well until we came to a little creek through which we had to drive before we arrived at the neighbor's house. It had risen with the spring thaws and the



water was much deeper than we realized. By the time we reached the middle of the stream it was almost touching the seat, and floated away everything that was movable. I tried to reassure my little boy, who was in tears by this time, promising that the neighbor would show us some better way to get back home. But alas! The neighbor had gone to town and we had to go through the same ordeal on the return trip.

### Proud to be a Pioneer

This was only one of the many harrowing experiences I went through, and yet, on the whole, those were happy days in spite of few conveniences and much hard work. Now I am a grandmother and often alone, but I am proud of being a pioneer and having helped to develop this country.



## They Lost Wheel But Got "Doc" There in Time!

By Mrs. Charles Butcher

My father filed on his homestead in the summer of 1906, and in May 1906, our whole family came to Swift Current. The summer was a very busy one and passed quickly, but I still remember with horror the long, lonely and extremely cold winter which followed.

When spring came, my sister went to work at the home of Judge Smyth, and in July, I went to work for a family by the name of Hadley who lived near Swift Current Creek and not far from "Six Mile Bush."



About ten o'clock one morning—the men had gone to town very early—Mrs. Hadley, who was expecting a child, became ill and sent me to a neighbor's home about a mile away to see if someone would go for a doctor. The husband was away and not a horse on the place, but Mrs. Tite, with her two small children, went back with me. As the need of a doctor was then becoming more urgent, I decided that I must walk the six miles to town. I waded through the creek, which was quite high, on my way. Reaching town, I soon located Mr. Hadley, who rushed to the livery barn, hired a democrat, picked up Dr. Kelly and a practical nurse who had been engaged previously, and we were soon on our way home. Just as we reached the top of "Oman's Hill" off came one of the wheels of the democrat. This was a calamity! While Mr. Hadley went off for another rig we three walked on, the nurse and I carrying some of the groceries. Soon a top buggy overtook us and the driver agreed to take Dr. Kelly the rest of the way. Much

to the relief of the nurse and myself, Mr. Hadley overtook us before we reached the creek. The baby boy arrived shortly after we did and I forgot my weariness in the excitement of knowing that I had made it possible for the doctor to get there in time.



## Oat-Field Raider Got Bullet Through Hat

By Mrs. J. H. Toland

East of the Old Battleford Trail which, in the early days ran through Ernie Benchley's land—now J. H. Toland's—is an alkaline flat impossible to cross in wet weather. During a hail storm on June 15, 1920, Ernie's horses wandered into the flat. As long as they kept moving they did not sink but one stopped too long in one place and when she began to sink, lay down, helpless. After the storm was over Ernie discovered her lying there and hurried to a neighbor's to phone for help. Several men came. At first they tried to drag the horse with a rope drawn round a crow bar driven into the ground, but the bar moved through the ground as if it were in water.

### Rescuers Embarrassed

Then they fastened ropes to the animal's front feet and its tail and pulled it first one way then the other until they had dragged it, a foot or two at a time, for at least a quarter of a mile and onto solid ground. Tired out and covered with mud and alkali, the men rested for a few minutes, wondering what to do next, when suddenly the old grey mare although she wasn't "what she used to be", struggled to her feet and walked away.

Ernie's oat field, through which the Trail ran, was often raided by people passing through, and one night he decided to scare the thieves with his shotgun. Imagine his surprise and theirs, when the bullet, which was meant only to frighten them, shot the hat off one of the men. Needless to say the owner did not stop to look for it.



## Pioneer Fires

One of the first big fires was that of the C&N bunkhouse, shown in top photo, when fire-fighting equipment was crude.

Centre, town fire hall, now incorporated in Farmers' Equipment Co. building. Alarm was bell in tower.

Lower scene on Central avenue at time of 1911 Great Northern hardware store fire. Building on right was Cooper's.



# The "Dear Old Golden-Rule" Days



In August, 1884, the first Territorial School Law was passed in Saskatchewan. This was to arrange for the organization of School Districts, the payment of grants and general supervision of schools.

By 1900, a one-room school was operating in Swift Current under the leadership of Teacher J. T. Dodds. He was succeeded by Robert Anderson, Mr. McDermott and Mr. Kilpatrick.

The cottage-type school was replaced early in the century by a cement-block four-room school. Nelson Latour was principal of this school for some years, and is still remembered as the beloved "Prof" by boys of that time.

In 1913, two school rooms were opened in what is now the City Police Station. A four-room school was opened on the edge of town on the southside and named Oman. This was in 1913. In 1914, Central and Elmwood Schools were completed, the latter being on the site of a former cemetery which was moved part and parcel to the present location north of town.

Two former cottage schools were put on as additions to Oman and Elmwood, while the cement block school served for a time as the City Hall. The High School, was housed for years in Central School, but became overcrowded, so the old cement-block building was again pressed into use, remodelled and provided a nucleus for the present Swift Current Collegiate Institute. This was in 1929. In 1944, a wing was added, which also houses an exceptionally fine Museum.

## Technical School Addition

In 1948, a modern Technical school was built beside the Collegiate and joined to it. This contains class rooms, workshop rooms, home economics units, and a beautiful auditorium.

In 1947, the Ashley Park community received a four-room school, but by 1954, the steady growth of that district necessitated the building of an addition to double its capacity.



Growth of Swift Current was reflected in school construction shown by dates above. From one room to four-room school in two years was quite a record.

Also in 1954 the Dickson School (named in honor of F J Dickson, 25-year secretary of the School Board) came into being to accommodate children in the fast-growing westend part of the city.

In 1920, the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis took over one of the large homes in this city and added to it, to organize the St. Joan of Arc Academy. In 1926, a Roman Catholic School District was formed and called St. Patrick's Separate School. Here both public and high school work was taught.

A kindergarten has been operated in the basement of the United Church for some years, and there has been a suggestion of another one being opened shortly.

#### Recalling Early Teachers

During the first fifty years many teachers have come and gone. But a number remained for some time and left a mark on the community they served. Among these may be mentioned the Misses May Hutchison, Eatha Shaunnassy, Florence and Anne Cochrane, Frances Logan, Wilma Thurston, Bessie Johnston, Dorothy and Marie Stewart, Marie Creighton, Edith Alexander, Jane Preston, Mrs. May Davidson, Mrs. A. G. Conlin, J. A. Welsh, J. H. Carefoot, R. A. Toole, K. S. Lewis, K. G.

Aberdeen, Ken Rutherford, and many others.

At the Collegiate Institute W. A. Beatty, was principal from 1924-46. Howard Couch succeeded him and is still Principal. The names of Ralph DesBrisay, Charles Warren, Bert Cooney, Anna B. Murphy, Florence Williams, Eunice Death, Anna McClenaghan, Anna Pidgeon have been closely linked with the High School work for many years.

Swift Current citizens have given faithful service to the School Board through the years. J. T. Dodds was the first Secretary-Treasurer, followed by J. E. Hemmaway for a period of ten years. In 1930 F. J. Dickson was appointed secretary and still holds that office.

Long-service members were: Daniel Buckles, C. E. Bothwell, W. W. Cooper, W. S. Yule, G. C. Thomson, J. O. Begg, James Clements, Dr. H. C. Burroughs, Dr. G. Cameron, Dr. O. M. Irwin, J. F. Whiting, D. R. Newsom, J. G. Cooper, Mrs. Jean Orton.

For a few years Duncan Brown was Superintendent of Schools in this City, later becoming Principal of the High School.

Many students from Swift Current Schools proceeded to various Universities, some of them chosen Rhodes Scholars.



1912 was boom year when many buildings such as Hospital Knox Church, Princess Royal theatre, etc. were built. Photo taken looking east from First avenue west.



## Collegiate and Public Schools



- Top left Oregon School South Side built in '13
- Center left Commercial School built in '14
- Bottom left Central School built in '14
- Top right Technical College built in '28
- Center right Ashby Park School built in '24
- Bottom right Dickinson School built in '34

## Police Gazette

The above picture shows Swift Current police turn back a 9 wheel fire engine at the Central Street and 10th and 11th Streets. The car is a 1910 model and was driven by Ernest B. Smith. It was a 9 wheel fire engine and was a 1910 model. It was a 9 wheel fire engine and was a 1910 model. It was a 9 wheel fire engine and was a 1910 model.

Other Chief's through the report have been James Bragg, Charles Duggan and Al. What other Police at Police carried on the work at one time during the 1910's.

Second man in police buggy is Tom Gleason, very farm operator at



See page 10 for a picture of a horse



## Weather Station

The first Dominion Meteorological Observatory was erected at the main who lived on the 1st of June 1880. The station was built by Mr. Wright. It was a 1st of June 1880. The station was built by Mr. Wright. It was a 1st of June 1880. The station was built by Mr. Wright. It was a 1st of June 1880.

Hourly 2 kind of stations are taken which are registered to other stations at the same time. It takes a night of time to know after the station.





## Have Provided Our Spiritual Inspiration

### St. Stephen's Anglican

It was the year 1885, when Louis Riel stirred the Indians into revolt, that, what was probably the first Church of England service, was held in Swift Current.

The Rev. G. E. Lloyd, later the Fourth Bishop of Saskatchewan, accompanied the British Forces as Chaplain, and held a drum head service in the open air, with the troops drawn up on three sides of a hollow square. The service was held somewhere close to the present location of the Canadian Pacific Railway depot, probably a little to the west of it.

One of the first halls used for a place of worship, and possibly the property of the Presbyterian church, was the old Scout Hall. Among the earliest worshippers are found these names: Mr and Mrs. Goodwin, Mr Knight, Mr and Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Marlow, Mr and Mrs. Haight, and John Furnus.

In the summer of 1885, determined efforts were made by the Vicar of Maple Creek to establish the Church permanently in the Village of Swift Current, and a little church building was erected. This original portion now forms the Chancel and Sanctuary of the present old Saint Stephen's Church.

Early vicars of the church were Rev. G. Stilwell, appointed in 1903, who also homesteaded south of the village and in 1906 Rev. Charles Wright, whose ministry was definitely of a pioneer nature. While attempting to minister to a parish covering an area of about 20,000 square miles, it meant services were held at only irregular

intervals in Swift Current, but with the arrival of M. C. C. James, in 1908, services were held regularly. Mr. James acted as Lay Reader, which office he has held ever since, and in which he still gives valuable assistance to the Rector. Recently Mr. James was honored by being made Diocesan Lay Reader. In 1910, Rev. John Swallow was appointed to the parish.

Rev. Swallow resigned in 1917, but during his term here a rectory was built in 1911 near the present CPR freight sheds, and the church enlarged to its present size in 1912.

During the tenure of office of Rev. R. E. H. Howell, appointed in 1947, the old rectory was disposed of and a new one purchased. Also suitable lots were purchased for the erection of a new church, corner of Second east and Chandle Street, the former site of the Methodist church.

In January 1952, Rev. Howell resigned his parish here to become Rector of St. Matthew's in Regina.

In May 1952, Rev. J. J. Scandrett was appointed and to him will fall the task of completing the building of the new Saint Stephen's church.

### Presbyterian

This, with the Anglican Church, was one of the earliest of churches formed in Swift Current, these two denominations being granted portions of land for the erection of their church buildings. The first home of the Presbyterians was just east of the Milne Block and here they built their church and manse, the church, later a

Scout Hall, was moved in the summer of 1952, from First Avenue east to another part of the city. This first building was dedicated for worship July 3, 1889, and the missionary in charge at that time Rev W. Moffatt. About 1903, with Rev Taylor as pastor, the congregation was growing larger and the Minister was a busy man, playing the organ as well as preaching. In 1904, a new organ was purchased at a cost of \$350, quite an event in the Church history, as the membership at that time was only 60.

In 1918, Knox Presbyterian Church was dedicated. This is now the Church Home of the United Knox and Metropolitan Church congregations and known as the Swift Current United Church.

Church members active in the life of the early days in the Presbyterian Church were Messrs. Dodds, Paisley, Grant, Small, McIntosh, Pietch and Alexander.



Sunday was church day for most pioneers. Here's one family ready for the long drive.



### Methodist Church

Methodist services in Swift Current began about 1893, when the Presbyterians gave them the privilege of holding week-day evening services each fortnight in their church on Railway Street. The Rev Mr Laidley, who was stationed at Maple Creek, came to conduct these services,

In 1892, a Sunday School was begun by a Mr. Patterson, who was a CPR foreman. When he was transferred to Wm.peg in 1898, the Sunday School was kept going by Wm. Milburn.

A few years later a small church was built on the corner of Cheadle and Second East, south of the site of the City Police Station. Then in 1911 and part of 1912, the Police Station building was constructed and used as a church until the Metropolitan Church, further north and across the street, was built.

The congregation worshipped in Metropolitan church until its destruction by fire on December 29th, 1946. Then they joined with Knox Church. During the pastorate of the Rev. R. H. Ranna, the former Knox manse became the home of the United Church minister.

Among early officers of the Methodist Church were Messrs. Argue, Cooper, Clin-  
te, Ballard, Milburn, Dr Graham, Wm Forge.

### Baptist Church

From the years 1911-1913 inclusive, Baptist church services and Sunday School were carried on in the school house on Cheadle Street east, from there to the theatre building later occupied by Warren's Undertaking Parlors. The next move was to the theatre adjacent to W. W. Cooper store, afterwards to the Lyric Theatre. Two ministers were in charge during this period Rev C. S. Elsey who was followed by Rev C. McKinnon.

In the year 1914, under the leadership of Rev Smith, a Baptist church building was planned and erected on First Ave. West and Sidney Street.

In the year 1915, approximately, the Rev Smith resigned on account of ill health and was succeeded by Rev William Taylor. About the year 1916-17 the Rev. H. C. Speller of Moose Jaw was called to the pastorate of the church, taking up residence in the Whittington house, corner of Sidney and Second Avenue West.



The final change took place in the year 1923, when Mr. W. Speed, a ministerial student from McMaster University, supplied for several months.

The Baptist Church building was then rented to the Non-Concurring Presbyterians who held services in the building under this arrangement for a number of years. This church body finally purchased the building and moved it to Central Avenue, corner of Sydney Street.

### St. Andrew's Presbyterian

This great tradition of worship and church government was brought to Western Canada by way of the Red River country. Between 1885 and 1890, the Presbyterians erected a church building in Swift Current on Railway Street, east of the Galbraith Block. This building was used by the Anglican Communion prior to the erection of their own edifice. The building however could not accommodate the number of Presbyterians coming to this city, so became the Scout Hall and a new building was erected in 1912, and dedicated as Knox Presbyterian Church in 1913.

Prior to the year 1916, there were plans and overtures for the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches in Canada. It was not until 1925 that this matter came to a head, when majorities of Presbyterians in Canada decided to break away from the Presbyterian heritage, to found, in conjunction with the Methodist and Congregational Churches, a new religious denomination to be known as the United Church of Canada.

The great strain of Presbyterianism was preserved by the non-concurring Presbyterians who found themselves without a church home. Temporary places of worship were used from January to April 26, 1925, when the first services were held in the Baptist Church on First Avenue West. The Presbyterians purchased this building and moved it to the corner of Central Avenue and Sidney Street, naming it "St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church." It is here that the ancient heritage, doctrine and polity of Presbyterianism are preserved.

### Roman Catholic Church

In 1912, a Catholic Church was opened in Swift Current. Rev. Father Cabanel was in charge. There were 200 parishioners who subscribed \$400 that day for the completion of the church. Later the Parish Hall was built.

At that time Swift Current was in the Regina Diocese, but later transferred to the Gravelbourg Diocese. Before the church was built services were conducted in the Magic Theatre on First Avenue East, with a portable altar being used.

A Rev. Father L'Abée was one of the early priests stationed here.

### 18 Churches Are Now Established In City

Swift Current can be called "a city of churches." The present list is as follows: Salvation Army, Mennonite Conference, Lutheran church, Anglican (St. Stephen's), City Mission, Presbyterian Church (St. Andrew's), Church of the Open Bible, Swift Current United Church Holiness Movement, Full Gospel Church, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Christian Science Society Church of the Nazarene, Roman Catholic Church (Sacred Heart), Church of God, Mennonite Brethren, Jehovah Witnesses, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

—Swift Current Sun, October 20, 1954

### Salvation Army

The first services were held 1912-1913 in the Army Barracks on a site north of Laycock's Drug store, with Officers, Captain Jones and Lieut. Johnstone. This building was destroyed by fire.

Then the building on Second Avenue East that had housed the first Methodist congregation, was purchased and moved over to Central Avenue. This was in 1916. Here, in 1917, Captain Delamont, now Mrs. A. Hulquist of Swift Current, with Ensign Stride, arrived to take charge of the work.

Faithful in the early days were Sergt. Major Jack Ball, Jim Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Olson and many others.

## Norwegian Lutheran Church

In 1912, a congregation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church was organized in Swift Current. This was accomplished by the Rev M. C. Woldat of the Lutheran Missions of Canada. The name of the new church was chosen to be St. Olaf's. Trustees elected at that time were John Grander, S. Hellekson and Olie Knutsick. Minister for the new congregation was Rev Mr. Bjild.

In August, 1954, sod was broken for a new church atop the Central Avenue Hill.

## Church of the Open Bible

This church had its beginning in the year 1940, with meetings held in a rented building on Central Avenue, one time used as a store, with Rev. Edwin Ratzlaff as pastor.

Meetings were conducted in the store building until the year 1945, when the present church, situated corner of Central Ave. and Herbert Street, was constructed. The basement was used as the main auditorium until later, when the church proper was completed.

Until 1949, it remained an independent congregation, when an affiliation with the Associated Gospel Churches was made.

## First Anglican Church



The Anglican church was permanently established here in 1885, when a determined effort by parishioners saw this building erected. It now forms the chancel and sanctuary of the old St. Stephen's building, corner of Railway and Second avenue east.



Progress in town planning can be judged by comparing this pre 1920 street with those of today. Note board sidewalk.



## Stone-boat Motive Power



Practically all hauling on pioneer farms was done with a stone-boat. Motive power was often supplied by oxen—or the family cow.



Fixing a "flat" was a man-sized job in early motoring days. Here's Martin Fee cussing his Hupmobile.



# THE YEARS BETWEEN



The village of Swift Current emerged from its infancy early in 1907, when it was incorporated as a town, with a population of about 800 souls. Wilfred Jones was the first Mayor. The eastern portion of the townsite at that time took in part of the William McTaggart homestead.

The Canadian Pacific Railway had made Swift Current a divisional point and built a round house, shops, and laid nine miles of tracks in the yards.

The payroll amounted to an average of \$5,000 per month. Late in 1907, the CPR was planning the building of a dining-hall and an up-to-date station for the benefit of the travelling public.

In the first four months of 1909, 82 carloads of settlers' effects were unloaded, valued at approximately \$98,400.

In January of 1909, plans for better fire prevention were felt necessary. Councilors presented a bylaw for \$12,000 to purchase a chemical engine, buy a site and build a fire hall. Also a better street program was being discussed.

The Town of Swift Current was to have its first electricity and gas, when a 20-year franchise was granted F. W. Laidley to operate a power plant. Electricity was priced at 18c for 20 kilowatts or less, 15c for 100 or more, and over 1,000, 9c per KWH. A water pipe-line was also planned for the town, with water to be pumped from the Swift Current creek by the Laidley Power Plant.

There were sufficient homesteaders and farmers settled in the surrounding district and sufficient grain being harvested, that in 1909 the town council granted John W.

Ford a loan in order that he might build and establish what was the first flour mill here.

By 1910, there were three "modern, up-to-date homes away from home" doing a good business: the Imperial Hotel, Chas. J. Turner, proprietor; Alexandra Hotel, H. C. Powley, and Hotel Reliance, Bertin and Webster. In the same year, W. Drever of Regina, when enroute home from further west, stopped over to visit an old friend, J. T. Haight, and was so impressed with the progressive town and its bright future, he immediately purchased property on 10th avenue (now 1st west) and Cheadle Street, for the erection of a three-storey, 70-room hotel. This was known as the Empress, later destroyed by fire on Christmas Day, 1932. This hotel was the scene of many formal and elite social affairs of the early era, having a large dining room, which was also used as a ball room.

## Real Estate "Boomed"

In 1911, new sub-divisions were opened up. In the eastern part of town, land that had been known as the Presbyterian property, was purchased privately, and through the owners' agents, was opened up in lots which were snatched up quickly, and named Elmwood Boulevard. The owners made plans to plant trees along the streets and thus make it a beauty spot of the town. A spot along the east creek (in this property) was being used as a bathing pool. This portion of property was donated to the town to be retained as a bathing pool, later planted to trees and became Elmwood Park. Webster Heights also came into being in 1911.



Real estate business was booming to such an extent, that many were trying to get into the business. T. P. Dohan, (who operated his real estate and insurance business until his recent death) resigned as CPR agent here and went into real estate with Mayor A. W. Snider.

#### Power Plant Started

Construction was started on the town-owned power plant in 1911, and after many tests, set-backs, etc., lights were turned on in 1912.

Building permits for the month of January, 1913, amounted to \$341,814. These were issued to J. T. Booker, hotel, 120 rooms, \$200,000 (Healy Hotel); public school, southside, already under construction, \$35,000; Clinite Store, \$20,000; O. B. Dreyer, undertaking business, \$18,500; Town Fire Hall, \$25,000, and many smaller permits.

Land for the new Methodist Church was dedicated, the basement already built in 1911 (now Police Station) was deemed too small for future needs.

The town was expanding to such an extent that a more adequate water supply was necessary. Engineering firms were consulted regarding the building of a dam across the creek, near the power house. This dam, with a reservoir, materialized in the fall of 1913, resulting in the flooding of Fenton's Grove, the only park and picnic spot near the town.

Toward the end of 1918, a census was taken to establish the right of Swift Current to become incorporated as a city. The result showed over the required 5,000 inhabitants, hence the city was incorporated.

At that time Swift Current had: eight chartered banks, five hotels, five churches, seven lumber yards, one semi-weekly news-

paper and one weekly newspaper, four theatres, three rinks (ice, roller and curling), 320 business houses, Dominion Land Office, Land Titles Office, Customs Office, 60 miles of truckage in railway yards and a 21-stall roundhouse, steam laundry, bottling works, cement factory, brass and iron foundry and mattress factory, six elevators, one flour mill, three machine shops.

#### First City Council

Frank E. West was the first city mayor, with the following aldermen: G. L. Cameron, W. W. Cooper, J. H. Forsey, H. C. Powley, Wm. Brown, John Grider.

Swift Current felt the first impact of the First World War in August, 1914. The Sun received the same bulletin service as was given dailies, and published one sheet "special editions" as the bulletins were received.

From then on Swift Current as a city, its organizations and citizens were geared to winning the war. Many Old Countrymen returned to their native land to join regiments, enlistments were the order of the day in various military units, and the greatest drain on the male populace came with the recruiting for the 209th Battalion in 1916.

After the First World War, Swift Current experienced a boom era again until the '30s, when the city and district fell prey to the drought and depression. Relief agencies were set up, both rural and city, with about one third of the populace on relief.

#### Second World War

In 1939, with the beginning of Second World War, Swift Current was chosen as the site of an Airforce Training Station, which was situated about four miles east. This became a village in itself, with hangars, barracks, recreation hall, stores, etc. Being a Commonwealth Training School, at the height of the training period, some 1,200 trainees were stationed here, being from all parts of the Empire.

At the close of the war, planes were sold cheaply, barracks dismantled, many be-

coming homes in the city, and the station became a "ghost town". The hangars were later taken over by local flying schools and services, and at present is the TCA Station.

#### Famous Visitors

Many notables have visited the city, the highlight being the visit of Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1961, when their train stopped here for an hour. Local dignitaries were presented to the Royal Couple, school children attended en masse. A platform was set up at the foot of Central Avenue and the children given "front row" positions in both directions of Railway Street and up Central Avenue. Presents for the Royal children were given their parents on behalf of the city.

## Memorial Cenotaph



Unveiled November 11, 1927, by Lieut-Gov. H. W. Newlands. Erected at cost of \$10,000 raised by special committee of which Chas. Thomson was secretary-treasurer. Fund subscribed to by all surrounding communities on quota basis.

## Service of the Local Red Cross

The Red Cross Society was organized in Swift Current during the First World War. Only those who worked with the Red Cross during those years know the tremendous amount of work done through those four years.

During the drouth years of the '30s, the local branch of the Society handled a great amount of relief clothing and food.

In 1939, Swift Current Red Cross received its present charter. The blood clinics were organized about this time, which played a big part in the treatment of war casualties. After the war, blood clinics were discontinued, but have now been revived on a greater scale with the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service in the province supplying hospitals with free blood and plasma.

An average of five clinics a year are now held in the city, with about 300 donors registering each time. A special appeal has been received for blood for gamma-globulin, the only known precaution against poliomyelitis.

While Swift Current has been fortunate



in not having any major disasters of great proportion, the Red Cross has always been on hand to help during such trying times as the 'flu epidemic, fires, and recently a partial-flood.

Other Red Cross Services which the local branch have taken an active part in are the Mother's Milk Bank, Swimming and Water Safety program each summer, and the establishing of a Sickroom Loan Cupboard, where articles required by a patient at home may be obtained on loan. There is also general welfare work done among the needy.

Junior Red Cross is organized in all the city schools. Each class or school have various projects or schemes to raise money for comforts for the Crippled Children's hospital and gifts for overseas children.

## Historical Notes on Women's Clubs and Organizations



The present-day Swift Current is well organized in the way of clubs, auxiliaries, lodges, etc. There are over thirty women's organizations alone, with many men's clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and lodges, such as the Oddfellows, Eagles, Masonic, Elks, Knights of Columbus, and others.

The Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements have been organized in the city for many years, but history of the Guides is not available. Both organizations have suffered periods of lack-of-interest, but at present are well organized with large memberships. Cubs and Brownies also meet regularly.

Many clubs have not retained their past minute books, with the result it has been impossible to obtain authentic history of their origin, original members having passed on or moved away. History of a few prominent organizations is given.



### Quota Club

The Quota Club, a service organization of professional and women in executive positions, was organized in Swift Current in January, 1936, with Miss Flora Law as the first president. Over the years a membership of about 20 has been maintained.

Aid to the hard-of-hearing is the main project of this club, also girls' work and charitable welfare work.

### Imperial Order Daughters of The Empire

The Order was organized in Swift Current in the summer of 1913, mainly under the directions of the late Mrs. S. A. Hutcheon, and chose the name of Victoria Chapter Two of the charter members remain in the city, Mrs. J. Smart and Mrs. W. Brunyee

The aims of the Order are to encourage the spirit of patriotism, to look after veterans and their families, to welcome new citizens, to encourage students to work for scholarships and bursaries, and to be ready to provide help in national emergencies. Money-making is not important, although large sums have been raised locally for specific projects.

Notable Regents have been the late Mrs. J. K. Smith, Mrs. K. P. Cairns and Mrs. A. J. Wigmore.

After the strain of the Second World War, membership fell off until it was decided to re-organize. This was done under the capable guidance of Mrs. E. McKenzie, and many young women were encouraged to become members and continue the IODE work in the city; so today, the Victoria Chapter has regained its good standing in the community.

### Local Council of Women

The Local Council of Women was organized in Swift Current in 1918, shortly after the First World War, when it was found advisable to have a central committee of women who would organize projects efficiently to help the growing needs of the city. In time, all women's clubs were invited to affiliate with this body, most having taken advantage of being represented with LCW, there now being 18 federated associations, representing church auxiliaries, professional groups, etc.

Since the years of depression, the '30's, LCW has operated a milk fund. Needy families, many on relief, were assisted and free milk distributed to under-nourished children at the schools. The fund now provides milk to needy families with school age or pre-school-age children.

The Canadian Association of Consumers has been incorporated in Councils of Women, and has been instrumental in obtaining many product improvements and concessions from the manufacturers.

The present project of LCW is the publication of this history book of Swift Current and the immediate surrounding dis-

trict. The archives committee, under the convenship of Mrs. W. Brunyee, assisted by Mrs. S. Boot, Mrs. C. E. Bray and Miss Clara Armstrong, has gathered material for many months, with the hope of preserving our glorious history at the time of the Golden Jubilee of the province.

### Homemakers' Club

The Swift Current Homemakers' club was organized in May, 1931, following the disbanding of the Victoria Order of Nurses organization here. Charter members of the club were former members of the V.O.N., who wished to continue holding meetings and working together.

Among the charter members were: Mrs. D. J. Sykes, Mrs. E. Sackville, Mrs. A. Galbraith, Mrs. W. McKay, Mrs. J. K. Smith, Mrs. W. Glaister, Mrs. W. Hogg, Mrs. A. Earl, all now deceased. Other charter or early members were Mrs. J. N. Orr, Mrs. Hans Kruse, Mrs. H. J. Kemp, Mrs. C. Buckle, Mrs. W. Gurney, Mrs. M. Neuhalfen and Mrs. S. Barnes.

Homemakers' clubs were organized as a provincial body in 1911, and local clubs are affiliated with the provincial under the direction of Women's Work director of the Extension department of the University. Club objectives are to bring women together for mental and social stimulation and community improvement. The Homemakers' motto is "For Home and Country".

The Swift Current club works educationally under eight committees: agriculture, arts and literature, home economics, international relations, legislation, public health and welfare. Each committee convenor arranges a program and roll-call for a meeting during the year, and gives a one-minute review along this line at each meeting.

While the club is not primarily a money-making organization, funds are raised by bazaars, teas and rummage sales, and contributions from the club are made to many public appeals. Considerable welfare is done—clothing gathered and quilts made and placed where they are needed, and many a

child's hands have been kept warm during past winters by mittens from the needles of the very diligent welfare convener, Mrs. J. N. Orr. The distribution of ten to twelve hampers at Christmas is also an annual undertaking.

### Orpheus Club

In January, 1915, the first Women's Musical Club was formed in Swift Current with Mrs. A. Munshaw as president. The first meetings were held in the Carleton Hotel.

In 1919, the name was changed to the Swift Current Musical Club and men members were admitted. But, perhaps as an aftermath of the First World War, the interest waned and in 1921 the club was disbanded.

In 1922 a group of women, interested in music, met and organized the Orpheus Club, which is still flourishing. The aim of this club is to raise the standard of music, foster appreciation and to act as a study group.

Each year, on the Sunday before Christmas, a Twilight Recital is held, of late years in the United Church, this practice having begun in 1942.

A Musical Festival was first held in 1930, and the festivals have grown in scope, size and interest ever since. In 1937 the Orpheus club offered a trophy for annual competition in the festival as an incentive to competitors.

Outstanding artists in the world of music who have performed in Swift Current through the years were Dame Clara Butt in 1914, this concert being held in the Princess Royal Theatre. Also in this theatre was a performance of the D'Oyley Carte Light Opera Company. The Welsh choir appeared in the Metropolitan church. The Hart House Quartette also appeared in Swift Current, featuring Boris Hambourg.

### University Women's Club

The Swift Current Branch of the Federation of University Women was organized on October 21, 1930, and has operated

ever since with an average attendance of 15 members.

Although primarily a study group, this Club has helped with various community projects, did War Work and annually entertains the graduating class of the Swift Current Collegiate at a formal tea.

Since 1946, this Club has solicited magazine subscriptions and renewals from Swift Current citizens, using the profits from this enterprise to provide a \$150 scholarship for a local girl who wishes to attend the University of Saskatchewan.

The first Executive was Honorary President, Miss Leila Scott of Toronto. President, Mrs. E. N. Grantham, Vice-President, Mrs. A. J. Smith; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Nora Southon; Program, Misses Murray, Southon, Belton, Sports, Mrs. W. S. Milburn and Miss Murphy.



**Home & School Association**

Home and School began in Swift Current in 1940 when, under the guidance of Mrs. W. A. Beatty, then president of the Local Council of Women, and Mrs. L. B. Thomson, chairman of LCW education committee, it was decided to organize a Home and School Association in the Collegiate.

An organizational meeting was called by Mrs. Thomson and the aims and objects were discussed. After much discussion it was decided an organization be formed with Mrs. J. O. Begg as the first president of the Collegiate Home and School Association.

Dr. S. R. Laycock was invited to speak to an open meeting in Central School auditorium, and at this meeting Home and School was sold to the public.

Parents of Elmwood School were the first public school to organize. With the help of Mrs. L. B. Thomson and Mrs. E. Sackville, an association was formed in Elmwood School in the fall of 1942. Mrs. J. L. Doughty was the first president.

Central School organized in 1944, with Mrs. C. McLean as first president. Oman School also organized in 1944, with Mrs. I. Helsel as president.

The new school, Ashley Park, opened in 1946, formed their Home and School Association the next year. They were assisted in organization by the late Mrs. Fred Weeks, and elected as their first president, Mrs. T. L. Pearson.

Parents of pupils of the new Dickson school, opened in the fall of 1954, organized their Home & School association, with Dr. D. Heinrichs as its first president.

St. Patrick's Separate School also has a Home and School Association, re-organized in September, 1954. James Donegan is president.

Regular monthly meetings are held at the respective schools with guest speakers, group discussions, panels, films, etc., as features of the programs. Each Home and School Association caters to the Graduation Exercises of its school, mothers of each grade being responsible for certain parts of the meal, the serving being done by Grade Eleven mothers and girls in Collegiate, and Grade Seven in the public schools.

Visitors' Day is held annually during Education Week, when parents may see the "school in action."

#### **Home & School Council**

In any locality where there are four or more Home and School Associations, representatives from each one may group themselves together in a Home and School Council. Such a Council was formed in Swift Current in January, 1945, with Mrs. B. W. Walker as the first president.



Its aims are to co-ordinate the work of the Home and School Associations in the city; assist in forming groups in the area thus strengthening the movement, to hold institutes for the purpose of studying problems. It is also the link between the Associations and the Federation.



### History of Scouting in Swift Current

When Scouting was first started in Swift Current, three troupes were formed with Scoutmasters Robert Clements, G. H. White, and C. Hadder. Ken Rutherford and the Fitzpatrick brothers instructing P.T. Some of the highlights from this decade of scouting were as follows: First—the visit of Lord Baden-Powell to our Province in 1935. Second—the first properly organized and chartered Mothers' Auxiliary, and it was due to their effort that we were able to take 117 scouts, cubs and guides to Regina to take part in the Scout Rally. To our knowledge we were the only group in the province to send a privately sponsored Scout to the Coronation of King George the Sixth.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, the call to the colors was answered almost 100 percent by the boys who had passed through the Troop from 1931-1939.

Scouting had its birth in Swift Current in the early 1900's under the able leadership of W. W. Cooper, who was our town's first Scoutmaster and Commissioner. As the pressure of business grew he relinquished his active leadership, but all his

life he took a keen interest in our movement.

Leadership was then taken by Dr. J. P. Whyte who, in turn, later became District Commissioner and served faithfully for a period of some 20 or 25 years until he retired.

The First World War brought about a decline, as wars do, and Scouting did not really flourish in Swift Current again until at the request of prominent business men and service clubs, it was re-organized in 1929-30 under the capable leadership of Robert Clements.



#### CALL OF SPRING

I wonder shall I ever grow  
Too staid to feel that quick, sharp glow  
Of rapture that I felt to-day  
And sounds that lured me from my bed—  
The cry of wild geese overhead,  
I wonder shall I ever lose  
Content to watch  
Such static ease of soul and mind,  
That I shall not watch, hungry  
The movement of that living veer  
Across the sky in graceful flight  
Until it disappears from sight  
I wonder shall I ever be  
Content to watch them placidly,  
Untroubled by the urge to trace  
Their course through prairie sky's vast space,  
To fly, as they with wings unfurled  
Above a spring-awakening world  
I wonder shall I ever lose  
A longing for the strength to choose  
An instinct-guided course, as they,  
Instead of following the way  
Of man-made laws, conventions, creeds,  
Which oft to barren wasteland leads  
I wonder shall I ever cease  
To feel a yearning for release  
From earth-bound things, when from the sky  
Comes that familiar rally-cry  
Which bids me follow paths untrod  
And leave the guidance to God  
Ah no! I would not have it so,  
For deep within my heart I know  
Such yearnings are spring-growth of soul,  
Whence comes new wisdom to control  
My outward life. In them I see  
A step toward soul-maturity

CLARA ARMSTRONG  
Swift Current Sask



## FROM Nursing Home TO Union Hospital

Swift Current Has Always Been Well Served Over the  
Years in Matters Pertaining to Health and Welfare



Among the names of those connected with hospitalization in Swift Current, Mrs. Warn comes first. During the time she carried on nursing in her home, she cared for 68 patients. She was followed by Mrs. Blue (at that time Mrs. Slicord), Mrs. Clinite and Miss Annie Smith. The latter lost only five patients out of something over a hundred who passed through her hands. This was considered an especially good record.

Later, Miss McLean opened up a cottage hospital, and this was used until a general hospital large enough to accommodate about 80 patients, was opened on March 11, 1912. There was no formal opening. The Hospital Board, which at that time was made up of A. W. Snider, S. Moore, J. Maher, I. E. Argue and R. Donald, received a great deal of help in choosing the furnishings, etc., from the Hospital Aid, whose president was Mrs. A. W. Snider, vice-president, Mrs. Ed McKenzie,

secretary, Mrs. I. E. Argue, treasurer Mrs. A. E. Small. The ladies put on a very successful bazaar in the fall of 1911, the proceeds of which were used to purchase linens for the proposed new institution.

Miss Tripp was the first matron and was assisted by Miss Crandall and a staff of probationers. Dr. Field, who was the first doctor to practice in Swift Current, had retired by that time, and Drs. Graham, MacArthur, Barroughs, Kelly and Hoppin were the doctors in attendance. The names of Miss Nelson, Miss Gillespie, Miss Shirley and Miss Hughes appear in records as the matrons directly following Miss Tripp.

### Union Hospital Opened

Very soon after the Public Health Region was formed in 1946, it became evident Swift Current was very much in need of a larger and more modern hospital, and planning which finally terminated in the formal opening on June 23, 1952, of what is one of



Considered one of the most modern in Western Canada, the Swift Current Union Hospital, was officially opened in June 1952. Much of its furnishings were provided through donations of local and district organizations and individuals.



the finest and best-equipped hospitals on the continent. Actual construction of the hospital was commenced in the fall of 1948.

At the time of the construction and equipping of the first hospital in Swift Current, the Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary played an important part. Under the leadership of Mrs. D. Berezan, the Auxiliary again assisted in the planning for and financing the furnishings for the hospital. A tag-day held in June 1952, in this connection, netted \$633.

#### Great Public Response

The furnishing of private, semi-private and public wards of the new hospital became projects of many local and district organizations. Private families also furnished entire wards, or donated articles of hospital equipment.

Mayor Ken Rutherford was chairman of the hospital board at the time of the erection of the Union Hospital. Superintendent of Nurses was Miss Helen Talpash.

(A side-light of the history of the new hospital, was the fact 89 people were housed in the unfinished building during the flood season of April, 1952.)

Following the official opening, the public was invited to inspect the entire building, from top floor to basement. The visiting list during the day and evening was a prolific one, it was estimated some 4,000 people passed through the institution before 10 p.m.

It is interesting to note, according to old records, the first patient admitted to the old General Hospital in 1912, was Mrs. Thomas Kendall, of Cadillac, and the last person to die there was William E. Belbeck of Swift Current, who passed away the night of June 24, 1952, a few hours before patients were moved into the new hospital.

At capacity the Swift Current Union Hospital has 114 beds, in addition to 29 bassinets. The total cost of the hospital, as of opening day, was approximately \$850,000. There are 45 wards, including 14 four-bed wards, 14 two-bed wards, 12 pri-

vate rooms and one three-bed room, there is also a sun-deck atop the fourth floor.

Through a public-subscribed fund, spear-headed by the local Knights of Columbus, a modern and fully equipped ambulance was added to the hospital in 1952.



## Swift Current Had First Health Region In Province

On July 1, 1946, health services were made available to residents of Swift Current district when the first Health Region was established, with Dr. A. F. W. Peart as Medical Health Officer. At that time there were 20 doctors in the Region and nine hospitals in operation. The doctors agreed to provide services to residents on a fee-for-service basis, using the 1938 schedule of fees. A discount of 25% was granted to the Region from these fees. Hospitals were paid on a "points" system.

#### More Doctors Needed

It soon became evident more doctors would be required, and by the end of December, 1946, there were 30 practising doctors in the region, and three additional hospitals.

During the past eight years, the staff of the Health Region, which is established in a building in Swift Current purchased by the Provincial Government, has been enlarged considerably. The present set-up includes public health nurses, school nurses, inoculists, sanitary inspectors, dentists, and a psychiatrist.

## Establishment of Larger School Unit

The Swift Current School Unit No. 15 was organized on December 13, 1944. It consists of 102 school districts surrounding Swift Current, extending from the river on the north to Vanguard and Lac Pelletier on the south. The larger unit was organized to provide better educational opportunities for boys and girls of Saskatchewan. 56 of the 60 superintendencies of the province have now been organized into larger units.

At present the Swift Current Unit has 84 operating classrooms with a teaching staff of 84 teachers. The Unit Office is located in the City of Swift Current. The Board consists of T. W. Garland, Chairman; R. G. Murphy, Vice-Chairman; J. R. Parsons, Ole Austrang and H. Dunn as trustees. The office staff is composed of S. E. McIvor, Secretary-Treasurer; Miss Jacqueline Edwards, assistant; Miss Mar-

garet Tjeltvest, librarian and helping teacher. The Superintendent of Schools is Bruce Fleming, B.A., B.Ed.

W. A. Carefoot was the board's first chairman. Other board members who have sat for one or more terms on the Unit Board have included George Dawson, Glen Gamble, J. Veer, Ed Stephens, T. J. Wall, J. Thiessen, P. T. Derksen and A. Ward.

Great progress has been made to improve the educational facilities and opportunities for boys and girls of this area. Some of the improvements include an extensive building and repair program, the organization of bus routes for conveyance of rural youngsters to urban centres, the financial assistance to rural high school youngsters attending regular high schools, greatly improved library services, more and better equipment and other teaching aids, and improved supervision and administration. Much still remains to be done.



## Swift Current Is PFRA District Centre

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada in 1935, with head office established in Swift Current. In 1936 the head office was moved to Regina, where all western activities through 18 district offices, are administered by a director. The present director is Dr. L. B. Thomson, formerly Superintendent of the Dominion Experimental Station adjacent to Swift Current, and the prime mover in the organization of PFRA.

Since 1937, the Swift Current District office has been under the direction of James E. Switzer. Nearly all branches of the PFRA services are represented in the Swift Current office. There is supervision of Swift Current Creek valley project, which extends many miles east and south. Also five other extensive projects in the district.

Then there is the movement and re-settlement of farmers from marginal lands to irrigated districts. The engineering services branch carries out surveys and engineering for construction of new projects, also maintenance of older ones.

Swift Current office is also headquarters for the District Community Pasture supervisor, who has under his supervision 17 pastures throughout the district.

Both engineering and financial assistance is provided through Swift Current office to farmers, groups of farmers, ranchers and others, in construction of dams, private irrigation schemes and drainage projects.

Thus in the Swift Current area, the fundamental reason for PFRA is being carried out, aiming at a greater security and stability for agriculture.

# Development of "Frontier Days"

In 1938, a group of young men, some 70 in number, known as the Kinetic Club, were given charge of sponsoring Swift Current's Dominion Day celebration. The club conceived the brilliant idea of re-incarnating in every possible detail, the western frontier days still vivid in the minds of old timers of this early western cattle town. The theme was to be known as "Frontier Days in the Bearded City"

Every male capable of growing a beard, began the growth of a hirsute appendage two months prior to the Celebration day. Females threw themselves into the spirit and sewing machines hummed in every household manufacturing crinoline dresses, with hoop skirts, poke bonnets, bustles and all. Thousands of slabs were brought in and false fronts soon transformed the whole city into a typical western frontier town

souls. Thus Frontier Days was on the map.

The primary idea behind the big show was to raise funds for a swimming pool in Swift Current. Each year the celebration took a different theme.

At that time an agreement was made with the City of Swift Current, to put on their Frontier Days show for five consecutive years, operated by the Kinetic Club. The old Agricultural Society was revitalized and became associated with the Frontier Days event which, by this time, had become so large that a greater organization was needed to handle it.

After the Kinetic Club had disbanded and the sponsorship taken over by the Chamber of Commerce, and realizing that Frontier Days had reached the stage where it could not be successfully staged by one club or organization, it was incorporated by a special Act at a session of Saskatchewan legislature as "Swift Current Agri-



The Swift Current Agricultural Society was first organized on April 2, 1900 and for 14 uninterrupted years held summer fairs at its grounds on the South side. Photographed above is the 9th edition. The grounds were dismantled in the late 20s and the buildings removed. Re-organization took place in 1947.

A rodeo was staged in the westend ball park grounds with outstanding riders from all parts of the continent participating. The parade, one of the most outstanding features of the celebration, brought newsreel cameramen in from near and far. It was estimated 25,000 people swarmed into the 1938 city of Swift Current of 5,000

cultural Exhibition Association." Three members of the original Kinetic Club are directors of the new association, who are Ralph G. DesBrisay, the original secretary, Ken S. Lewis and Ken G. Aberdeen. Irving Hansen is general manager.

From the one-club celebration, Frontier Days has grown into a business enterprise

with total assets of \$85,000, in buildings, grounds and cash on hand. The spacious fair grounds in Webster Heights boasts, grandstands, bleachers, livestock buildings, concession booths, administration building and exhibits buildings, also midway area. The rodeo entertainment has been contin-

ued each year. In 1954, chariot races were added to the program.

The first harness races to be held in Swift Current, for a number of years were sponsored by this association in August, 1954.



## Swift Current Band—Era 1910



Except for short periods of time, there has been an organized band in Swift Current for the past 45 years. So far as history shows, the first one was organized in 1909 under Bill Stephenson and went by the name of the Swift Current Town Band. In 1911, the band was first uniformed, the colors being blue with red braid trim. Sponsors have been the City, the Ellis Lodge and the Eagles Lodge.

Photographed above is the 1910 band under the direction of Mr. (General) Booth. Partial identifica-

tion has been made as follows: Top, left to right—Bert Brown, Andy Wilhelm, Charlie Graham, Bob Bowers, Jack Dowdle, Bill Bowers, (other three unidentified). Middle row—Jack McKay, Bandmaster Booth, Morris Moore, a Mr. Wheat Bottom—, Burley, Les Moore, Bill Stephenson (later leader of the famous Caber Band), next man unidentified. Another pioneer bandsmen here is George Bowers, he joined the band in 1911. Since 1944, Swift Current has been served by a Boys Band.

# The Swift Current Boys Band



*This is the Boys Band that won the Eaton Trophy at Calgary in 1950*

## Music Festival Influence

For a number of years Swift Current has enjoyed an enviable reputation in the field of Music, much of which has been due to the part played by the Swift Current Music Festival, which is held annually in the spring. This was started in 1929, with George Bowers as President, and Miss Dorothea Horton as Secretary, both of whom did excellent work.

In the early years some notable awards were brought back to the city. The bands under the direction of Frank Morris, who was followed in a very capable manner by Charlie Warren, have done very well. We also had the Male Chorus with Percy Town as Conductor, and this was also a good aggregation. There were also two very good Male Quartettes, not to mention all the excellent solo performers. It is to be regretted that much of the Festival competition is now confined to younger groups, adult competition being practically non-existent.

The City has recently lost one of its outstanding musicians, in the person of the late Mrs. J. H. (Connie) Fownes. Men-

The Boys Band that has served the city so well since 1944, got its start under director Chas. W. Warren in December of that year as a Cadet band. First practice was in the physics' lab of the old co-negate. Over the years it has won great distinction both in Canada and the U.S. Mr. Warren retired in 1954 and David Stuart was named his successor. The Band comprises three divisions, each with a Majorette Corps.

tion must also be made of the wonderful contribution in the cause of Music by Mrs. Verda Town, who has earned the title of Mrs. Music in our City. She now occupies the position of Music Director in the City schools. So much individual work has been done by numberless musicians in the past, that it would be impossible to mention them all in the limited space at our disposal.

For the past four years the Christmas Season has been highlighted by the Carol Festival sponsored by the Inner Wheel Club. School choruses, choral groups and choirs take part in the two-evening programs which open with community singing. A new choral group, known as the Philharmonic Choir and comprised of members from local choirs of all denominations, under the direction of Dr. K. H. Neufeld, is adding much to the good music entertainment of the city.



This scene taken in 1907 was on the occasion of a two-day Dominion Celebration. Note the band mounted on drift in foreground. Among those in the crowd left are Charlie Thoreson and Sam Moore. Population at that time was about 800.



## Local Firms Celebrate 50 Years of Service, 1953

### The Imperial Hotel

This hotel was built in the spring of 1903, by a man named Corbett, who later sold it to George Webster. It was the first hotel in Swift Current. To it, the cowboys from the ranches, and homesteaders came to have a good time. Meals served three times a day, and they all seemed alike, especially to people coming here from Europe who were unaccustomed to having meat and potatoes served for breakfast! But Mr and Mrs. Webster were congenial hosts and guests were made very comfortable.

From 1907 to 1910, the town was busy with land-seekers, coming from all parts, to choose land as far away as over the Saskatchewan river. It was a common sight to see many democrats and teams with drivers piling up to the Imperial to load their passengers for a journey of one or two days, sometimes two weeks.

George Webster enlarged the hotel considerably, and the present owner, O. C.

Sutherland, has renovated it to a modern building with an attractive restaurant in the same building.

### The Swift Current "Sun"

The need of a newspaper to express the growing needs of the rip-rolling frontier village of Swift Current came to a head in 1903 when W. Milward Yates, rancher from out at The River bought out The Signal at Maple Creek and published the Swift Current Sun from there. The late Charles Reid and other merchants felt that this arrangement did not adequately serve the purpose, and Mr. Yates was persuaded to dispose of The Signal and establish the plant here; and it was, over Mr. Reid's store on Central Avenue (now Christie Grants).

In 1906, W. O. Smyth, a local lawyer later to become a judge, formed a company to be known as The Sun Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., the stockholders being himself, Charles Reid, William Sanders,



Milward Yates, Andrew and Harry Patterson, George Webster and D. J. Wyhe. Mr Sanders, a former Mountie, later was in the butcher business here and ranched just a couple of miles north of town. The Pattersons had a furniture business, George Webster owned the Imperial Hotel and D J Wyhe was a Maple Creek rancher, later member of the legislature.

In 1908 Sam R. Moore bought controlling interest in The Sun, and in 1912, Mr Reid built the plant building for him on Railway street.

In 1933 Mr. Moore retired and moved to Victoria, and sold his interests to his son, Robert Moore, the late Mahlon Hutchison and Jim Greenblatt.

### Three Papers Here in 1911

At one time there were three newspapers operating simultaneously in Swift Current. In 1911 Bert Green and Harry Brinckton started the Weekly News as opposition to

The Sun. Then in 1912, in came the Daily Express, the men behind it being W. O Smyth (who promoted The Sun firstly) and A W Snider, who was to be mayor of the town.

The News was sold to Bill Sharpe, now of Shaunavon, named The Herald, which was later taken over by Gren Corbett and A. G. Carey. In 1941 The Herald was sold to four men out of the University of Saskatchewan, Frank Hanson (now editor of the Commonwealth at Regina), Sid McArton, Alex Tooth and Stan Crowe. The Herald later went into sole ownership of Mr Hanson who sold his interests to The Sun in 1948. From then on there has only been one weekly newspaper in Swift Current.

In 1953 The Sun acquired the Chénite block on First East, ordered a new Goss Cox-O Type press. Remodelling took some five months, and in January 1954, The Sun moved into its new plant.



*This was the original Cooper store located on Railway Street facing the depot. Photo taken in summer of 1904*

## The W. W. Cooper Co. Ltd.

(Now Pioneer Co-Op Ass'n Ltd.)

In 1903, W. W. Cooper and his brother-in-law, I. E. Argue, began a small retail business on Railway Street. Soon they decided to expand and built on the present site on Central Avenue. At that time there were no wholesale supply houses and goods had to be brought in independently, in car-

load lots. They sold groceries of all kinds, hardware, clothing, furniture, barbed-wire, seed oats, wheat, potatoes, as well as many other articles.

Once this firm had seven cars of apples and nine cars of other goods in the freight yard at the same time. In 1915, there was a bumper grain crop on the prairies and the W. W. Cooper Company (Mr. Cooper had

bought out Mr. Argue's interest in the business in 1912) brought in a train load of 26 freight cars loaded with banded twine.

Serving an area of at least 100 miles in all directions, this firm supplied farms and ranches as well as the townsfolk. One man came periodically to Cooper's with two four-horse teams and loaded up with sacks of sugar and flour, cans of milk, ropes, halters, saddles, clothing, harness, wire, etc.

#### Arrival of the Mennonites

In 1905, many Mennonites arrived from Manitoba and a number of them settled southeast of Swift Current. Large loads of supplies went out to their colonies, one of the commodities being green coffee from Brazil. Construction companies would send in huge orders, sometimes to the value of \$1,000, these orders had to be assembled in a few hours.

In July, 1926, the store building was burned, but was soon re-built on the same site.

### Sykes Company

J H. Sykes opened a blacksmith shop here in 1905, switching to farm implements in 1909, when he secured the Sawyer-Massey agency, first in the district. He built a garage in 1910 and took on the McLaughlin car agency, selling the first model to a Medicine Hat customer.

The business switched to musical instruments and supplies in the early 1920s. Fire partially destroyed the store in 1929,

and, when it was rebuilt later that year, E. H. Sykes succeeded his father, who retired.

A subsidiary company was formed in 1947 to handle sales of propane gas, and this was sold to Hugh Gas in 1964. The Sykes business was wound up, and the building demolished, in December 1954, ending the 51 year history of this well-respected firm.

### Ed. McKenzie Limited

A chance meeting of two Easterners Ed. McKenzie of Martland, N.S., and Beecher Mann of St. Thomas, Ont. at Moose Jaw in the early years of the century grew into a partnership that opened Swift Current's first exclusive dry goods and men's wear store. This partnership was formed in 1906, with the store established in a new addition of the Imperia Hotel which was built that year. The firm opened under the name McKenzie & Mann.

This partnership continued until August 1921, when Mr. Mann died. The business was taken over by Mr. McKenzie, who formed a limited stock company the following year. In 1946, his sons Les and Doug joined him in the business upon their return from service overseas.

Over the years, the firm has operated in only three locations. It moved from the Imperial to the Bilbrough Block in 1910, at which time it sold out its dry goods stock and became an exclusive men's wear store. In 1932, the business was moved to the McKenzie block (built in 1914)



One of the early merchants was Charles Reid, whose store, above, was on Central part of present Christie Grant block.

# SPORTS

## DOWN THE YEARS



Sport, from 1909 to the outbreak of World War I, was mainly featured by baseball and hockey. Swift Current's first professional baseball team was in the season 1911-12, when players were "imported" and the club was entered in the "amateur" league with Weyburn, Regina and Moose Jaw, and subsequently thrown out because, old-timers swear, they were too good for the other teams.

Among those on that team were Harold Ailsby, well known farmer now of Vesper, the manager J. W. Ford, father of Bill Ford. Then came another great team of mostly imports, which saw some of its players go direct to the newly-formed professional league, like Bobby Gange, George Rochon and others.

One of the early hockey and ball stars here was the late Rosie Helmer, who later became coach of the New York Americans and piloted great Calgary hockey teams.

An early "great" baseball team of Swift Current around 1909-10, toured some of the United States one summer. Among well known early ball players still living were Jim (Doc) Black, Ernie Dodds, Reg Hodgson.

The next local hockey team to be in an organized league was the hockey team, all

local, of 1924-25, coached and managed by Jim Greenblatt, with such names as Howard Day, Jim Borthwick, Dr. McCord, Postmaster Hugh Corrigan, Len Mitchen, John Sanders. Then came the era of the famous Indian intermediate teams, which dominated the western scene from 1928-46, winning 11 Southern titles, five provincial and two Western Canada championships. Names come to mind of Sykes, Borthwick, Pascoe, McNeillie, Cowan, Buzmeki, the Knipfels, Dempsey and many others.

From the '20s to well into the '80s baseball flourished here, but died away in the forties and, after a two-year semi-professional return, slipped again into the doldrums.

Tennis enjoyed popularity here in the earlier years, one of the top players just before World War I being a provincial champion by the name of K. L. Betz.

Rugby of late years has become a popular school sport.

Curling has been enthusiastically indulged in ever since about 1909, with presently an artificial ice rink and a large membership, making it one of the most highly-regarded games of the winter season.

Juvenile hockey has made a resurgence, with the result that last year our juveniles won a provincial title.

Elmwood Golf Club boasts one of the finest club houses and 18-hole courses in Saskatchewan. Holiday tournaments are held regularly every year.

A Figure Skating Club, organized in 1949, trains about 100 children every year.



Swift Current's 1911 Ball Club. Extreme left, E. N. Christopherson, extreme right, Jake Kruse.



Swift current 1909 team. Amateur champions of Saskatchewan which toured North Dakota Minnesota and Iowa. Top row left B. M. Hall Bert Evans. Centre row at right Ernie Dadds Dr. A. Black. Bottom row left of Manager Schoonmaker is Reg. Hodgson.



Swift current 1910-11. 2 hockey club. Manager W. Lind left entire. Top entire late Rose Palmer. Top left late Ben Bowers brother of George and Bruce Bowers city. Bottom left Harold Ailsby, now farming at Vesper.



# THE MODERN SWIFT CURRENT

Burdened by Overwhelming Debenture Debts  
20 Years Ago, This Prairie Metropolis is Now  
On the March and Headed for a Bright Future



Swift Current was created a town on March 15, 1907 and a city on January 15, 1914. In the early years between 1909 and 1919, the town and city exercised its borrowing powers far in excess of the capacity of the ratepayers to repay, and a debt of \$1,790,550 was accumulated, including debentures, bank loans, and interest. In the intervening years, sound administration has placed the city in a greatly improved financial position.

The city operated under agreements with its creditors from 1923 until 1938, at which time a further agreement designed to pay off the remaining debt of \$1,042,623 was reached. By December 31, 1953, the debt had been cut to \$695,733, an indication of the continued fine progress being made. A further sign of progress and stability was the fact that this date marked the end of the Board of Supervisors, which had acted as a Board of Control for 30 years, from 1923 to 1953.

The city has now assumed full responsibility for civic government. These accomplishments speak well for the men who guided the city's destiny in these difficult years and for the city's employees. J. E. Friesen, 1953 Mayor, was chairman of the select committee which made final agreement with the creditors in 1938. F. J. Ashford has been City Clerk since 1936 and George McLeod, his Assistant, has been a city employee since 1934. C. W. Poole is City Engineer.

Swift Current celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1933, at which time a monster celebration was held, and a commemorative plaque was placed in the City Hall. Population at that time was just over 5,000. The mayor was F. C. Hayes, celebration chairman, R. A. Bridgman, president of the Board of Trade; and Chas. Thoreson was secretary.

Saskatchewan's Golden Jubilee year, 1955, will be Swift Current's 72nd birthday. Arrangements for celebration of Saskatchewan's Jubilee are being made by the executive committee of the Swift Current Agricultural and Exhibition Association, of which Cliff Sherriff is President, Grant Denike, chairman of the Board, and Irving Hansen, manager.

In the past twenty years Swift Current's population has

doubled itself, and it is now estimated that the population stands between 9,500 and 10,000. The 1964 taxable assessment was \$6,692,775 and the mill rate 70 mills.

#### **Geared for 100,000**

Swift Current has an excellent water supply assured by the nearby Duncarn Irrigation Dam built by the PFRA. This reservoir has a capacity of 100,000,000 gallons. It holds enough water to irrigate 30,000 acres of district irrigation land, and it is "water insurance" for the city, being able to maintain a water supply for a population of an estimated 100,000 people. A new filtration plant addition went into operation in 1954, constructed at a cost of \$180,000. This plant has double the capacity of the old plant—two million gallons daily.

oil fields from the local plant.

Construction activity has been tremendous in the city during the past eight or ten years. Building permits for the nine years since 1946, total \$7,871,778. In this period there were 769 new homes built. New sewer and water connections total 913. Building permits for 1953 totalled \$2,561,030, of which \$1,828,025 were for 250 new homes. In the first part of the year, close to 160 homes were built in the new North Hill housing development. Permits for the first 10 months of 1954 totalled \$1,896,970. This included over 90 new homes. The 1954 outlay for sewer and water extension totalled \$151,000. A new 48-inch storm sewer has been constructed on Railway Street to help drain the city.

The new Trans-Canada No. 1 highway



*Aerial View of Swift Current Showing CPR Yards*

The city operates its own electrical distribution system, taking power from the Saskatchewan Power Corporation plant here. The Corporation has begun construction work on a new plant in Swift Current to cost \$750,000. This plant will serve Swift Current and district including the adjacent oil fields. The Corporation has also announced plans for the construction of a \$250,000 transmission project for the

passes through the northern limits and there has been tremendous development in the area of the city near the junction of this highway with No. 4 north-south highway. This development includes an excellent motel, a trailer camp and service station facilities. A Red River cart marker is to be placed in this area, which is close to the old Battleford Trail. This is being done by the Provincial Jubilee Historic Sites

Committee, in connection with the 1955 Jubilee celebration. A small park is to be developed around the marker by the Rotary Club. The Provincial Department of Highways is now investigating a new route for the entrance of No. 4 highway into the city from the south.

Along with the expansion of other facilities, there has been a big increase in the number of telephones. There are now over 3,000 telephones in Swift Current, a 150 percent increase in the past 10 years. An extension to the Saskatchewan Government Telephones' office is now being built here at an estimated \$250,000. Traffic lights were installed during 1954, at two of the city's main intersections on Central Ave., a further indication of progress.

#### 60,000 Area Population

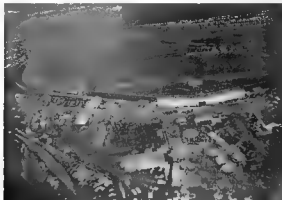
Swift Current is ideally located in the centre of Southwestern Saskatchewan's vast trading area. It is the only city in an area of over 100 miles radius. The population of this area, including Swift Current, is close to 60,000. Swift Current has thus become the business, industrial and distributing centre of Southwestern Saskatchewan, having around 250 places of

business. Swift Current is a divisional point of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and six branch lines radiate from here. The C.P.R., which first came to Swift Current in the fall of 1882, now has a million dollar annual payroll.

#### \$16,680,000 Retail Sales

The year 1946 marked the beginning of a large-scale expansion and renovation program for local business places. Stores, restaurants, hotels, theatres and other places of business have undergone extensive renovation since that year, and Swift Current's shopping district, on or near Central Ave., now combines up-to-date appearance with good service facilities. The industrial section of the city in the west end has also shown marked development, as well, and now a commercial area has been completed west of Eleventh Ave., West.

In 1953, business activity was at a high level. Retail stores had a volume of \$16,608,000 in sales, an increase over the 1952 figure, which was \$15,548,000. This amount represents 1365 percent of Canada's business. Swift Current's population is 0601 of the national Twenty nine hundred



*Aerial Shot of Kinetic Exhibition Grounds on July 1st*

red local families had a net disposal income after payment of taxes of \$16,146,000. The average net income of families in the city was \$5,568. The average for Canada was \$4,339, and for Saskatchewan \$5,058. Post office clearances in 1941 were \$53,427, and in 1963 they were \$88,198.

### Big Distribution Centre

Over a dozen wholesale houses distribute fruit, groceries, baking products, automobile parts, implements, oil-well supplies, coal, oil and gasoline and propane gas over a wide area. Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures show that the gross value of manufactured goods in 1941 in Swift Current was \$788,803. In 1951, the value of these products increased to \$2,982,132.

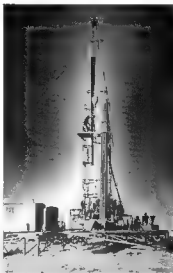
The main industries of the city are, flour mill, bakery, bottling works, creameries, building contractors, cinder-crete block manufacturing, locker plant, implement manufacturing, abattoir, four grain elevators. Alaskan Processors now operate a large plant started by the Canadian Co-operative Processors Ltd., in 1944. This plant processes horses to supply the European market with horse-meat for human consumption and also manufactures pet food. Expansion of business and industrial plants is still continuing and several have recently announced plans for expansion.

Swift Current is served by an excellent weekly newspaper, "The Swift Current Sun", which has a circulation of over 6,500. It has played an important part in the building of our city, and is growing steadily. Recently, The Sun moved its office from the old stand on Railway St., to new, modern quarters on First Ave. East. This paper has won many awards in provincial and Dominion-wide competitions.

### Bridge Dream Came True

From the early days of Swift Current's history, trade and travel to the north was restricted and inconvenienced by the lack of a bridge at Saskatchewan Landing, 28 miles north. Crossing of the Saskatchewan River had to be made by ferry. For many years the city and the Board of Trade cam-

paigned for a bridge across the Saskatchewan. In 1951, this dream came true, when the Provincial Government completed a bridge across the river. The bridge was destroyed by an ice-jam in the spring of 1962, but was reconstructed by 1963. The bridge means a great deal to Swift Current, and no doubt is contributing to its progress.



### Oil-Strike Was Bonanza

Another contributing factor in Swift Current's progress in recent years was the discovery of oil in the district. Since January 1952, when Socony-Vacuum Exploration Company brought in its first commercial find of medium gravity oil near the village of Fosterton, 27 miles northwest of Swift Current, this area has been the scene of an intensive oil-exploration program. Socony has discovered oil in five separate places in the vicinity of Swift Current-Fosterton, Success, Cantuar,





No. 4 Highway Bridge at Saskatchewan Landing

**North Premier and Midway** The closest well to Swift Current is about nine miles away. The combined fields of Fosterton, Cantuar and Success and smaller adjoining fields have nearly 50 producing wells. By mid-summer of 1955, it is expected that 300 wells will be possible producers.

At the present time, work is proceeding on a \$10,000,000 pipeline from Cantuar to Regina, a distance of 155 miles. This pipeline will connect with the Inter-Provincial Pipeline at Regina, and it is expected that 20,000 barrels of oil daily will be carried to St. Paul, Minn., where a refinery is now under process of construction. These oil exploration activities have had a pronounced good effect on Swift Current.

#### **Socony Comes to Town**

At the beginning of 1953, Socony-Vacuum set up a geological headquarters in the city to handle the exploration program in southwest Saskatchewan. Many different oil well supply and service and drilling companies have established office, storage and warehouse facilities here. New trucking companies have also been established to service the oil-exploration program.

#### **Establishment of Parks**

A picture of modern Swift Current would not be complete without some mention of park facilities. Busy citizens were not unmindful of the need for beauty spots and as a result seven fine parks have been developed through the years. Earliest to be developed was Elmwood Park, situated along the creek in the east end of the city. This park, started around 1916 was the only park to be started by the city itself; the others were all started as the result of work of service clubs. The pioneer gardener at Elmwood Park was Mickey Bristow.

The Kiwanis Club has successfully operated a swimming pool alongside Elmwood Park for many years.

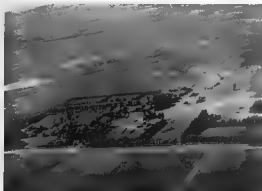
The Cenotaph honoring soldiers who fell in two world wars is located in Memorial Park, which was begun by the Rotary Club around 1918. In 1928, the Lions Club built a wading-pool park in the east end of the city. Care of this park was later taken over by the Rotary Club. Another very fine park is located just south of the Swift Current Hospital. This park was taken

over by the Kiwanis Club in 1936. H. J. (Shorty) Kemp was responsible for its landscaping and care in the early years, and a commemorative plaque bearing his name is located there.

The Kinetic Club built another wading-pool in the west end of the city in 1951, and another fine little park has been built around this pool.

The latest park being developed by the city is on the South Side. Here it is planned to have a beauty spot combined with re-

creational facilities, such as a quarter-mile under track for track and field events. Playground equipment has been placed in this park area by the Lions Club. Considerable development has been carried out by the Rotary Club of Swift Current on a block of land just west of Marilyn Court. This area has been fenced in and playground equipment has been installed. A campaign for a swimming pool for Swift Current is now in progress and, if successful, the pool will be placed in this park.



## Dominion Experimental Station

A splendid contribution to the growth of Swift Current and to the development of agriculture has been made by the Dominion Experimental Station at Swift Current. Established in 1920, for special service to the drought area, it has developed to be the largest branch of the Experimental Farms Service operated by the Dominion Department of Agriculture.

Special problems of the area have formed the basis for its general research program, but the station has become a centre for all work in Western Canada in the lines of Soil Research, Agricultural En-

gineering, Grassland Studies and Turkey Nutrition and Breeding.

Active leadership and direction has been given to the vast rehabilitation program of the dryland farming area by the station. It continues to investigate special problems and supply basic research data for the PFRA and other agencies. Rapid progress in the mechanization of agriculture in the establishment of a sound land-use program, in a forage and livestock policy, and other major changes have been stimulated by the active fact-finding work of this major agriculture research organization.

at Swift Current.

New grains, new grasses, new cultural practices, new machinery, improved livestock and poultry, better soil handling methods, and a sound understanding of production practices as developed at Swift Current have added much to the stability of the many soil and farming zones of the short-grass plains. The continued interest of this Station in developing improved and advanced methods is maintained in order to fulfill the original undertaking in full measure for the low rainfall area where it is centred. Superintendents: J. G. Taggart, L. B. Thomson and G. N. Denike.

## 14th Canadian Hussars

The history of the 14th Cdn Hussars dates back to 1905, in the Units that it has perpetuated. So it also celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1955. In 1905, an independent squadron of the Mounted Rifles was organized in Moose Jaw. In 1910, the 27th Light Horse was organized with headquarters in Swift Current, and in 1912, the two were amalgamated as the 27th Light Horse.

In 1921, the 14th Canadian Light Horse was organized from the 14th Canadian Mounted Rifles and 27th Light Horse. In 1938, the Regimental name was changed to 14th Canadian Hussars, in honor of the 14/20 Hussars, the allied Regiment in the British Army, and on the occasion of los-

ing horses to become an Armoured Car Regiment.

In 1941, the Regiment was organized as the 8 Recce Reg't. (14 C.H.). The Regiment served as a Reconnaissance Regiment for the 2nd Cdn. Division. In 1949, the 14th Cdn. Hussars was changed from the 8 Recce Reg't. to 8th Armoured Car Reg't., and in July 1953, again changed to the 8th Armoured Car Reg't.

The Regimental area extends from the South Saskatchewan River on the north to the International Boundary on the South, to the Alberta Boundary on the west and to a line running north and south through Chaplin on the east—an area of over 16,000 square miles, the largest Regimental Area in Canada. The Regiment has 12 Sub-Units which are spread over the whole of the Regimental Area. In addition, the 14th Hussars have affiliated cadet corps in Maple Creek, Gull Lake, Fox Valley and Swift Current.

The Hussars have a beautiful new "home" situated in Kiwanis Park. The Armouries—a \$250,000 two-company structure—was opened early in 1954, and houses Regimental HQs, HQs Squadron and an Engineer Field Park Squadron.

The building, beautifully landscaped, accommodates besides a large drill hall, officers', sergeants' and men's messes, all modernly fitted. Equipment comprises Scout and Armoured Cars.



Since this photo was taken, landscaping of Armouries grounds has been completed.

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